

T H E A T R E
O F
E D U C A T I O N.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
O F
T H E C O U N T E S S D E G E N L I S.

Leçon commence, Exemple achevé.

LA MOTTE, *Fable de L'Aigle et L'Aiglon.*

I N F O U R V O L U M E S.

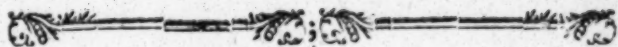
V O L. I.

D U B L I N:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE merit of the Theatre of Education, is sufficiently acknowledged in the universal demand for the original, which, in less than a year from its publication, has been translated into six foreign languages.

The French Censor has justly observed, “ that it is impossible to paint morality in colours more natural or more affecting ;” nor has any performance appeared in the present age more capable of inspiring the young mind with a love of virtue.

The work is equally adapted to the instruction of both sexes, who will find engaging descriptions of characters well worth their imitation, and meet with instructive examples to deter them from those vices and follies which are most incident to an early period of life. Though the Comedies of the Countess de Genlis, in which she has shewn extensive knowledge, fine taste, exquisite sensibility, and the most exalted virtue, were written for the use of youth, they are not confined to the improvement of the young ; persons of all ages, of all

iv A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

ranks and professions, may discover useful hints for the regulation of their conduct in the most important situations of life : where they meet not with instruction, they will always find amusement, but in general, it has been the aim of this respectable lady to unite these objects, in which she has so happily succeeded, that her work is considered as an agreeable domestic monitor in most families on the Continent.

P R E-



P R E F A C E

OF THE EDITOR.

IT must be allowed, that the Author of this little Theatre has the merit of having invented a kind of Comedies of which no one had hitherto conceived the idea; it is a species of writing which undoubtedly may be improved, but a first attempt is entitled to indulgence. Great difficulties were to be surmounted in making them interesting without the aid of intrigue, violent passions, the contrast of virtues and vices; in short, when the Author had laid it down as a rule, not to allow a male character to appear (a), nor a single sentence to be uttered, which was not of itself a lesson, or did not lead to some instruction.

These comedies are only moral treatises brought into action, and it is hoped that young people may find lessons in them, both entertaining and instructive. Besides, in playing these pieces, in learning them by heart, several advantages may be found; such as, engraving excellent principles on their minds, exer-

(a) The seclusion of male characters applies only to this volume, which appeared some time before the rest.

cising their memories, forming their pronunciation, and giving them a graceful pleasing manner.

Learning detached pieces of verse and prose by heart, cannot produce the same effects, because it is impossible to declaim alone in a chamber with the same spirit as in playing a character.

We have few comedies which young people can play without danger, and most of them are above their comprehension. The author has very attentively guarded against introducing any character truly odious; none have been presented but growing errors, always accompanied with a good heart, and consequently susceptible of correction.

There is only one character, that of Dorina in *The Spoiled Child*, which is really vicious, but it was thought right to guard young people against those mercenary flatterers, sometimes to be found among the domestics by whom they may be surrounded, which is the sole reason for having represented that person so odious and disagreeable.

In short, these essays, the fruit of the labours of an author who has dedicated her youth and her life to that kind of meditation, have been dictated by the most laudable motives.

May the children who shall read them be struck with the examples they contain! May they thereby become better, more feeling, more ingenuous, more affectionate to their parents, and every wish of the author will be accomplished.

HAGAR in the DESART,

A

SERIOUS DIALOGUE.



THE PERSONS.

HAGAR.

ISMAEL.

THE ANGEL.

Scene a Defart.





HAGAR in the DESART,
A
SERIOUS DIALOGUE.

SCENE FIRST.

HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

HAGAR, leading her son in one hand, and carrying a pitcher in the other.

WHAT a dismal place! . . . What dreadful solitude!

ISH. Mama, let us return to my Father; we were so happy while with him!

HAG. Alas! my child, hatred and jealousy have driven us from thence, never more to return.

ISH. Hatred ! what have I done to deserve hatred ? And Mama, is it possible that any one can hate you ?

HAG. Envy, my son, breeds cruelty and injustice ; it occasions hatred, which is the blackest and most detestable of all the passions.

ISH. Can a heart of any sensibility ever be tainted with it ?

HAG. A feeling heart may run astray ; — pride, my son, may corrupt the most compassionate disposition, and give it up to all the violence of revenge.

ISH. Ah Mama, if I have any pride, I pray you employ all your attention to correct it.

HAG. Reason alone should be a sufficient security to us. The Author of nature has made nothing but what is good, to him we are indebted for all our virtues, but our vices we owe to ourselves.

ISH. We are born then without pride ?

HAG. The Almighty has impressed a salutary desire in our hearts, which leads us to distinguish ourselves, and to pursue what is honourable.

ISH. That is self-love ?

HAG. Yes, my son, it is that divine principle which makes great men and heroes ; it is then pure, and such as it was when bestowed upon us by the Divinity ; but corrupted man abuses the precious gift, he debases and changes its nature, and by turning it towards vain and trifling objects, it at last degenerates into pride.

ISH. Mama, God Almighty is good ; when we obey his law, he will certainly love us.

HAG. He is then our Father.

ISH. Why then do you lament ? wherefore are we without help, without support in this desert ?

HAG. He watches over us, and means only to try us.

ISH. In the mean time, we are oppressed with fatigue and vexation : deprived of food and protection, how can we resist so many ills ?

HAG. By courage which contemns them, and resignation which submits without murmuring. To suffer is the portion of this life ; it is a time of storm and trial ; but it is short, and quickly passeth away, and is followed by immortality, glory and happiness, as the reward of virtue. Let us then cease to complain ; let us think of the happiness which awaits us, and endeavour to render ourselves worthy.

ISH. Mama, you are not afraid then of death ?

HAG. Alas ! I have no fear, but the fear of surviving you.

ISH. Death then is nothing ! — it is but for an instant ! — but to suffer, to endure thirst and hunger, ah Mama !

HAG. There is an affliction still more dreadful, my son — it is that of not having it in our power to comfort those we love.

ISH. Have I not felt it ? — Have I not seen you in tears ?

HAG. Ah! my child, if I could save your life by the sacrifice of mine! —————

ISH. What could I do without you, Ma-ma? —————

HAG. My dear Ishmael ——— Cruel Sarah, if you but heard him ——— if you saw him ——— yes, your barbarous heart would be melted. ——— And what must I feel? ——— Ah! my son, let us not despair; our lot is dreadful, but the Almighty protects us, and can change it.

ISH. This desert certainly produces some wild fruit which can afford us nourishment, but under such a sultry sun, we are consumed with thirst, and neither spring nor rivulet is to be found. —————

HAG. Perhaps we shall discover some. ——— Besides, this pitcher, now our only property, still has some water in it, which I reserve for you, and is the last resource of maternal tenderness.

ISH. I will share it with you.

HAG. It is only by saving your life that I can prolong mine.

ISH. Mama!

HAG. What would you, my child?

ISH. I have not slept these two days; I feel myself quite tired, let us sit down.

HAG. Come, and take some rest, it will recover your strength; here, lie down under the shade of this bush.

[Ishmael follows her, and lays himself down, she places herself near him with the pitcher at her feet.]

ISH. Mama, do you try and sleep too.

HAG. No, my dear, I will watch over you.

ISH. You will not go from me while I am asleep?

HAG. Ah! can your mother leave you one moment! ---His eyes are shut---O happy age! --- [Ishmael falls asleep.] Sleep, sleep, my child, you will not feel your misfortunes, and mine will be assuaged --- [she looks at him attentively.] Alas! how his features are changed! They bear the impress of grief. O my son, if it was not for thee, for thy sorrows which tear my heart, with what courage could I support my fate! --- But to hear him complain --- to see his falling tears, O Heaven, it is a torment I cannot endure, and exhausts all my resolution. How he sleeps! --- Poor child! --- [she embraces him,] how I love thee! [she puts her hand upon his forehead.] His face is burning, the sun strikes upon his head. Alas! even in his sleep he is destined to suffer! --- But cannot I form a shelter for him by tying my veil to that branch? [She tries to draw the branch to her.] I cannot reach it; I must get up and take off my veil. [She gets up, and in moving overturns the pitcher and spills the water.] Gracious God! what have I done? --- That pitcher, my only resource, the life of my son! --- Ah! wretched woman that I am, - this water might at least have served till to-morrow - before that time, by new attempts, we might have discovered some spring! --- [She falls down near her son oppressed with grief.] Oh, Heaven! ---

ISH. Mama !—

HAG. O, my son !—

ISH. Oh, Mama ! I burn—I can no longer endure it—a cruel fire consumes me.—

HAG. [Taking him in her arms, and covering him with her veil.] O God, have compassion on my distress !—

ISH. Mama, I die of thirst ; one drop of water, dear Mama, and you restore me to life.

HAG. Alas, my son, alas ! receive then my last sigh.—Thou diest, and I the cause ;—pardon me, dear child, I follow thee.

ISH. Have you then drank all the water, Mama ?

HAG. What sayest thou ? ——— Great God. ———

ISH. If there were any remaining, and you felt what I now feel, Mama, I would not drink it.

HAG. My child ! can you think me so inhuman ?

ISH. Alas ! my grief and sufferings disturb my reason ; pardon me, dear mother.

HAG. I wanted to shelter you from the sun, and rising for that purpose overturned the pitcher. Alas ! I have been the cause of your death ! ———

ISH. No, Mama,—no—that water could not have saved me.—

HAG. How pale he grows !—My child !

ISH. Mama, give me your hand—let me kiss it once more. ———

HAG. His hand is cold and trembling.—
My child? ——— He makes no answer! ———
Ishmael, open your eyes.—Once more em-
brace your unhappy mother—[She puts her
hand upon his heart.] It still beats.—[She
kneels.] O Almighty and most gracious God,
to whom all things are possible! O thou, the
support and protector of the unfortunate, deign
to cast an eye of pity upon me.—If it be
thy will, O God, I submit; but my confidence
in thy goodness is equal to my obedience!—
Preserve to me the gift thou hast bestowed, or
at least, O Lord, do not condemn me to survive
him.—I await thy decree.—but it is
a father who is to restore him. ———

[She sinks down near her son, with her face
hid.

[After a long silence.

ANGEL [behind the scene.] Hagar?—

HAG. What do I hear? What heavenly
voice comes to revive my soul? ———

[A sweet symphony heard at a distance.
Where am I!

[The curtain, at the bottom of the stage,
rises, and discovers the Angel sitting upon
a cloud, with a palm branch in his hand.
The scene shifts to a delightful landscape,
ornamented with fruit and flowers.]

S C E N E II.

ANGEL, HAGAR, ISHMAEL.

ANG. Hagar!—

HAG. What do I see! [She looks steadfastly on her son lying motionless on the ground.] O, my son!

ANG. [Coming forward.] Hagar!—Dry up your tears.

HAG. My son is then to be restored to me! — But, O heavens! he is still motionless.— Ishmael!—Ishmael!— — He is gone; he is no more! — [She rises quickly, and runs to throw herself at the feet of the Angel.] Must I then lose all hope? —

ANG. Is your faith and confidence equal to your submission, Hagar?

HAG. [Still at the feet of the Angel.] Yes, I am resigned.—Alas! if God requires it, I shall even cease to complain. But my courage forsakes me — a dreadful doubt freezes me to the heart. Is it the will of God to try me, or to weigh me down with sorrow?

ANG. Will you, without murmuring, sacrifice all that remains to you of this world—that beloved child?

HAG. From the goodness of God I received him—he can withdraw his bounties. [She rises and runs to her son.] My son! — I call upon him in vain. Alas! if he was still alive he would hear me. The voice of his distracted mother

mother would recall his senses. My cries are fruitless ; Ishmael cannot answer.—Ishmael ! O name hitherto so pleasing to repeat !—O much loved name, which I shall no longer pronounce without trembling ! —————

ANG. Hagar ! Wherefore do you give yourself up to vain despair ? ————— You bewail your son. He appears dead in your eyes ; but do you doubt of the power of the immortal God ?

HAG. [Raising herself.] His power !—Ah ! undoubtedly he can do what he pleaseth ; he can dry up the source of my tears ; he can restore my son — Fool, that I am, I weep, yet God sees and hears me. Perhaps he is offended with the excess of my sorrow. That thought oppresses and rends my heart. O God, pardon my guilty transports ; deign to cast a look of paternal tenderness on this child, that his innocence may plead with thee. O may he not fall the victim of the faults and frailties of his unhappy mother. O Heaven, let thy wrath fall only upon my head, and restore my son, that he may live, that I may speak to him and hear him ; O, my God, and with my dying breath I will adore and bless thy justice and thy goodness.

ANG. Hagar, every thing with which you are now surrounded points out, or portends his infinite goodness ; he hath transformed the dreadful desert in which you were sorrowing, into a delightful abode. His power and glory shine around you.

HAG. Alas ! one object strikes my sight.
I can see nothing but Ishmael deprived of
life.

ANG. O Hagar, be not cast down ; thou art
faithful and submissive. Have you not the hap-
py privilege to hope for every good ? What
miracle is impossible to the Supreme Being,
who sees into your heart ? He judges and pro-
tects you. He punishes with a sparing hand,
and he alone can reward beyond measure.

HAG. O Heaven ! What do I hear ! what
comforting and heavenly language !

ANG. Open your eyes, and see, O Hagar,
the goodness of the Lord working a new mira-
cle for you.

[The Angel touches the earth with the
palm branch, and instantly an abundant
spring bursts forth.

HAG. O, my God ! such benefits cannot be
sent to me in vain ; it is thy will that I shall
enjoy them ; Ishmael shall revive ?

ANG. [Draws near to Ishmael.] Hagar,
approach !

HAG. [Running, throws herself upon her
knees at the feet of her son.] O, gracious God !
my son ! but is not this illusion ? His colour
returns. — O Heavens ! if I deceive my-
self. [She takes him by the hand.] His hand
is no longer cold. — Ishmael ! O, my God !
compleat what thou hast begun !

[After a short silence, she looks attentively
at her son.

He opens his eyes — O, my son ! — I die.

[She sinks upon the ground.

ANG. Hagar, Hagar, revive to praise and thank the Lord.

HAG. [Recovering.] Ishmael !

ANG. Resume your senses, Hagar, and look upon your son.

HAG. My son ! — He is restored to me. — Do I not dream ?

ISH. [Raising himself up.] Ah ! I revive.

HAG. O ! my son ! my dearest child, come to my arms ; come and embrace the happiest of mothers ! What do I say — No, let us prostrate ourselves and give thanks to Heaven.

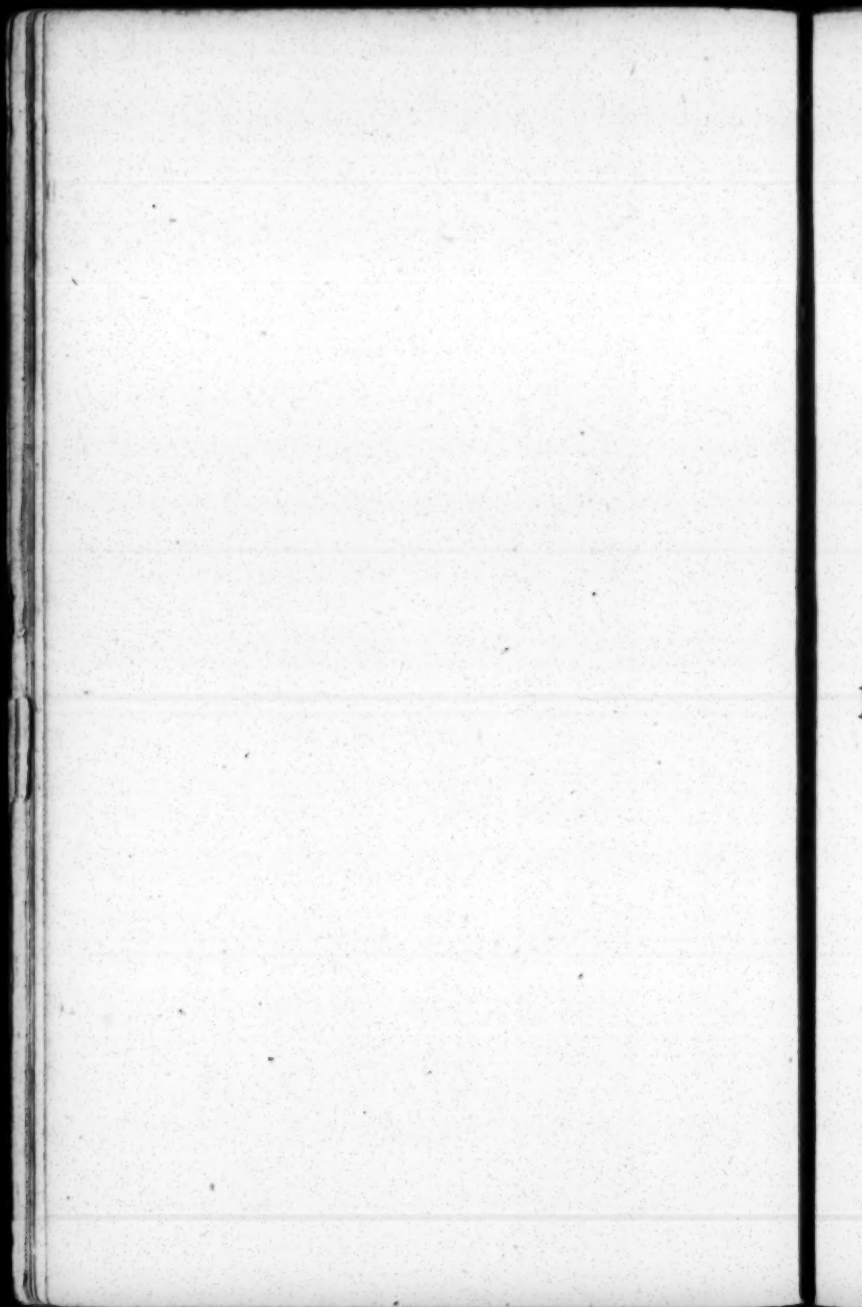
ISH. Ah, mama ! What do I not owe to Heaven, that has again restored us to each other !

ANG. From henceforth, Hagar, enjoy unchangeable happiness. The Lord commanded me to try you ; he is satisfied, and all your sorrows are at an end. Educate your child, teach him to be virtuous, and inspire him with the fear, and more especially with the love of the Lord. That is the most pleasing homage which gratitude can offer.

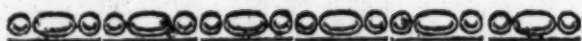
HAG. Ah ! can I fail after so many benefits ?

ANG. May your example, Hagar, remain a lesson to mankind ; may it correct the murmurings of foolish mortals, and teach them to know that God can reward patience, submission, courage and virtue.

THE END.



THE
BEAUTY
AND THE
MONSTER,
A COMEDY,
In Two Acts.



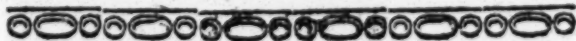
THE PERSONS.

SABINA.

PHEDIMA, friend of Sabina.

PHANOR, a Genius.

The Scene is in the Palace of the Genius.





THE
BEAUTY
AND THE
MONSTER,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.
SCENE FIRST.
PHANOR, SABINA.

PHANOR appears holding SABINA by her robe,
while she seems to fly from him, turning
away her head with horror.

PHANOR.

AH, Sabina ! stay, I pray you, one instant ;
deign to hear me but a moment.

SAB. Let me go—let me go.

PHA. If you command me, I obey; your least desires are supreme laws for the unfortunate Phanor; but when he presumes for the first time to beg a moment's conversation, will you have the cruelty to refuse?

SAB. [aside.] Unfortunate Phanor! how I pity him!

PHA. [letting go Sabina's robe.] Sabina, you are free: I wish not to owe any thing to violence; you may still fly me if you please.

SAB. [still turning away her head.] But what have you to say to me?

PHA. O Heavens! you tremble.—My hideous aspect must inspire you with aversion, Sabina! you may hate me, but alas! wherefore should you dread me?

SAB. I do not hate you.

PHA. Well then, my wishes are gratified—the happiness of being beloved is not for me, I do not pretend to it; but learn, however, that this horrid figure which you dare not look on, conceals a feeling, delicate and faithful heart.

SAB. [aside.] How affecting his voice!—Wherefore must—[She looks at him and screams with fright.] Oh Heavens! [She takes some steps to fly from him.]

PHA. [wishing to stop her.] Ah Sabina, calm your fears.

SAB. In the name of heaven, let me go. [She escapes.]

SCENE

SCENE II.

PHA. [alone.] I began to soften her, her soul was opening to compassion, but a look, a single look has undone all — and can I still continue to hope? — Cruel fairy, thou enjoyest the excess of my sorrow; thy power, superior to mine, has hitherto condemned me to support life under this hideous form, and I cannot resume my original figure, but by making myself beloved, and in this frightful shape gaining a heart which has been hitherto insensible. Ah Sabina! if you knew my secret, or if I was permitted to tell it; but the fatal oracle forbids. — Alas! how unhappy am I, and the greatest, the most cruel part of my sufferings is, loving as no one ever loved before.

[He sinks upon a chair oppressed with grief.]

SCENE III.

PHEDIMA, PHANOR.

PHE. [without being perceived.] Sabina told me he was here. — Ha, he is so!

PHA. [raising himself up.] O Phedima, what is Sabina doing?

PHE. I come from her to tell you, that she is exceedingly afflicted at having left you in the hasty rude manner she did.

PHA. And why did she not come and tell me so herself?

PHE. Is that your complaisance to me?

PHA. Phedima! I beg your pardon, I per-

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C

fectly know how much I am indebted to you ; alas ! if it was not for you, what would become of me ?

PHE. Come, come, I forgive you ; I have no resentment, and to prove it to you, I must tell you, that the short conversation you have just had with Sabina, has worked wonders.

PHA. How can I think so, after the proofs of aversion which she shewed at quitting me ?

PHE. But she is sorry for it, is not that a great deal ?

PHA. But she never can get the better of that dread she has in looking at me.

PHE. Only think, it is but eight days since you carried us off, and to speak plain, I must say that more than eight days are necessary to be reconciled to your figure. If you had not admitted me into your confidence, and won me to your interest a long time before you brought us hither, though I am not so timid as Sabina, I believe I should not have had courage to look at you this moment.

PHA. You have been the friend of Sabina from her infancy ; you are acquainted with her heart and her sentiments, tell me then sincerely, charming Phedima, do you think at present, that the hopes you have sometimes given me are not absolutely chimerical ?

PHE. At this rate I must always repeat the same thing to you. Well then ! Sabina has sensibility, a delicate understanding, and a grateful heart : merit and virtue must make deep impressions upon such a temper as hers, and you have every thing to hope from time.

PHA. But notwithstanding the entertainments and pleasures I procure for her, she seems to be dissatisfied in this palace.

PHE. She is delighted however in being in it. An orphan, and tyrannized over by cruel and unjust relations, she was about to be sacrificed to their ambition, when fortunately you came and carried us off.

PHA. Sabina was going to be united with a person who was not worthy of her, and whom she did not esteem; but alas! perhaps since she has seen me, she regrets the loss of him.

PHE. You may rest assured that she every instant rejoices at the happiness of having escaped, and yet the object of her hatred possessed all the charms of the most seducing figure; but he was deficient in understanding, and more so in delicacy; he is an ignorant rustic, without one promising quality, and Sabina thought him hateful.

PHA. You know, Phedima, what are the reasons of my attachment to Sabina; it was not the charms of her person which produced that sentiment so deeply impressed upon my mind. O happy day, never absent from my thoughts, when by my art, invisible to human eyes, I stopped in that meadow where the young companions of Sabina were celebrating her birth-day. Melancholy had overspread the countenance of your friend, which at first struck me, and melted me into compassion; she withdrew from the crowd, and with you only, sat down at the foot of a palm-tree, while she disclosed her mind to you.

PHE. And you heard our discourse?

PHA. I did not lose a single word. Sabina lamented her fate, and the ill-suited match to which her friends obliged her to consent. "Alas! said she, the authors of my being are now no more. An unhappy orphan, I no longer depend but upon relations who are insensible to my prayers and tears; young and without experience, I ought to respect their authority, and the first duty of my age is obedience: I have lost the guides given me by nature, and the law has assigned others to whom I must submit. If they abuse their power, they will be more to be pitied than I; I shall become their victim, but I shall have done my duty, and surely there are no sorrows, but must find comfort in conscious virtue and innocence."

PHE. Sabina said all this?

PHA. But in a manner, a thousand times more affecting. A deluge of tears rushed down her cheeks.

PHE. Yes, I recollect she was in tears.

PHA. She then remained some time silent.—

PHE. I admire your memory, for in short it is two long months since that conversation, and you remember the smallest circumstances, even the Palm-tree.

PHA. Ah, that Palm-tree, I think I see it still! it supported Sabina's head; Sabina's hair touched its bark.

PHE. And against what tree did I lean?

PHA. In the whole meadow I saw but one Palm-tree.

PHE. [laughing.] O! Now you are in fault.
—Let us try again; what did I say to Sabina?

PHA. Nothing, I believe.

PHE. Nothing! Pass two hours with Sabina
and not answer her?—But hush, I hear a noise;
somebody comes.—'Tis she.

PHA. It is Sabina, I leave you.

PHE. Yes, for a moment, but don't go to a
distance, I shall call you back presently.

PHA. Remember, Phedima, that I have de-
posited the dearest interests of my life in your
hands.—Farewell, I see Sabina.

[He goes out.]

PHE. [alone.] Poor Phanor! how affecting
his discourse! His goodness, his benevolence
and understanding should make his deformity
be forgotten.

SCENE IV.

PHÉDIMA, SABINA.

SAB. [entering in deep thought.] Such virtue
deserves another fate.

PHE. Sabina!

SAB. I did not observe you, Phedima.

PHE. You are very pensive, deeply engaged.

SAB. Yes, I have reason to be so; I was
thinking of Phanor.

PHE. Well, what then?

SAB. Phedima, we have been eight days in
this palace, and till now we did not know whose
it is.

PHE. This palace belongs to Phanor.

SAB. Hear me ! I just now, for the first time, walked out of the pavilion in which we live, and which is parted from the rest of this vast palace by a large garden ; after having crossed it, I found myself in an immense gallery. Judge of my surprise when I saw a prodigious crowd of men, women, and children, all differently clothed.

PHE. Probably they are the subjects of the Genius.

SAB. No, I inquired, and am informed they are only travellers !

PHE. How travellers !

SAB. We did not take notice, Phedima, of the affecting inscription which Phanor has caused to be engraved over the gate of this palace ; this gate is always open, and you may read over it, To all the Unhappy.

PHE. O ! all is explained then.

SAB. If it had not been by chance, I should still have been ignorant of the sacred asylum in which we live : Phanor would never have informed us.

PHE. Sabina, you are in tears !

SAB. I do not desire to prevent it. Ah, Phanor ! unhappy Phanor ! heaven has been unkind to you !

PHE. Must heaven grant every gift ? Phanor has been favoured with virtue and understanding.

SAB. But that hideous figure !

PHE. Sabina, ask the unfortunate inhabitants of this palace, if that figure which is so disgusting to you, prevents them from loving Phanor.

SAB. They ought to love him; gratitude should oblige them.

PHE. And you, do you owe nothing to Ph-nor? He succours the unfortunate, because he pities them; your misfortunes likewise drew his attention, and he carried you off that he might rescue you from cruel violence; in short, in becoming acquainted with your virtue, he attaches himself to you, and you cannot love him. —

SAB. Alas! I love him when I do not see him.

PHE. Such a manner of loving is quite captivating! If he had no other attachment to you but one of those contemptible whims, founded solely on your exterior charms, you would do right to say to him, 'my figure pleases you, I am sorry for it, because yours is frightful to me;' he then could not reply; but it is your understanding that pleases him, your disposition which has captivated him. If you were ugly he would still love you.

SAB. Ah! If he was only-ugly!

PHE. In fact he possesses all those qualities by which you have charmed him, but you are insensible to them!

SAB. Insensible! No I am not; but I never can accustom myself to look at him.

PHE. I conceive that at first he terrifies, but when his goodness and gentle temper is known, is it possible to fear him? Besides, though it is true that his figure is very singular, yet I have seen some more disgusting. He does himself justice at least; he is not a fool.

SAB. A fool! - How silly you are!

PHE. Why should not he be like many others who are scarce more favoured by nature?

SAB. You were with him just now, what did he say to you?

PHE. That you are the cause of his unhappiness.

SAB. That is a great unhappiness to me.

PHE. I am certain he is not far off.

SAB. Do you think so?

PHE. Shall I call him?

SAB. I dare not. —

PHE. Come, come, how childish!

SAB. I think I hear him.

PHE. Yes, it is he.—Sabina, you turn pale!

SAB. No, no, 'tis nothing—Phedima, do not leave me.

PHE. Here he comes, I pray you constrain yourself, and remain for a moment.

SCENE V.

SABINA, PHEDIMA, PHANOR.

[Sabina goes to the opposite side.]

PHA. [approaching gently.] She is going to fly from me again.

PHE. Phanor, I was going in search of you.

PHA. I thought I heard my name pronounced, and —

PHE. You tremble, and are speechless.

PHA. I am indeed.

PHE. [looks attentively at Sabina and Pha-

nor.] This outset promises well, the conversation will be spirited — [To Sabina.] If I constrain you, I will withdraw.

SAB. [holding her.] Ah, Phedima!

PHA. Sabina, say, would you have me retire?

SAB. No, do not go away.

PHE. Shall we have some entertainment to-day?

PHA. I wait Sabina's commands.

SAB. I have just now been enjoying the greatest pleasure I have tasted in this palace; you have hitherto deprived me of it, Phanor, I must complain.

PHA. Of what?

SAB. Can there be a more pleasing entertainment, than to see benevolence assisting the unhappy, and to hear gratitude applauding virtue?

PHA. Can there be a happiness comparable with that of being approved by — Sabina?

PHE. By those we love.

PHA. Phedima explains what I dare not.

SAB. Phanor! — you are too timid.

PHA. Ah Sabina!

PHE. Well! why so silent, Phanor?

PHA. What Sabina! do not my ears deceive me? my sentiments are not hateful to you! you allow me then to take the liberty of declaring them?

SAB. Let me never be accused of ingratitude.

PHA. Alas! I accuse only my unhappy fate.

PHE. Now we are fallen back to our former sadness ——— (low to Sabina) Speak to him.

Come, make an effort ; at least look at him.

PHA. O heavens ! what do you say, Shedima ? No, Sabina, do not look at me ; I shall lose all my happiness.

SAB. [looks at him with timidity, and then upon the ground.] You see, Phanor, that you are unjust.

PHA. Ah, may you still prove it to me ! (He approaches towards Sabina ; she starts, and takes some steps to fly from him ; he draws back, and Sabina remains motionless.)

PHE. [after a short silence.] They are both astonished. — Well, Phanor, I who have no dread of you, desire you will give me your arm, and conduct me to the play. You promised me an entertainment, and positively I must have it ; come along —

PHA. Sabina, you may follow your friend without fear, I shall remain here.

PHE. By no means, you must do the honours of the entertainment, for my part I insist upon it : you carried me off as well as Sabina, I was as unhappy as she, so that I have the same title to your complaisance. — Besides, I think I deserve some little preference ; you do not appear handsome in my eyes, but I think you truly amiable. (She takes hold of his arm) Sabina, will you come with us ? Why don't you answer ? O you are in the pouts.

SAB. [Aside.] How she teazes me !

PHE. Adieu, Sabina.

SAB. [vexed.] Since I incommode you, I pray you go, Phedima — go, Phanor.

PHA. [quitting Phedima's arm.] O heaven, Sabina, can you believe it ? —

PHE. What means this? I never saw you in these whims before. — Come, come, what is here to do! Will you go to the play? for my part I will not lose it for your fancy.

SAB. Yes, I will go—if Phanor will go too.

PHA. Ah, Sabina! I am sensible of the value of such goodness, but to profit by it would be perhaps to abuse it. — Pardon me, I can see into your heart, though I have done nothing for you, yet you imagine you owe me gratitude; you strive to combat the just dread which my countenance inspires, but I suffer much more from your uneasiness than my own, and I cannot endure the constraint you impose upon yourself. You reign here, you are the only sovereign of this palace; rule over all in it, and fly me; if you are free and content, Phanor will be too happy.

SAB. Thou most generous of men! How contemptible should I be in my own eyes, if from henceforth I could look upon you with uneasiness. — No, Phanor, gratitude can never be a painful duty to the heart of Sabina.

PHE. Very well, let us begone, we will finish this conversation at the play. (She takes Phanor by the arm.) Sabina, if you want a conductor, Phanor can—

PHA. O heavens! take care what you say.

SAB. [looking at Phanor, with timidity, but without terror.] Phanor, will you give me your arm?

PHA. Ah! if you pity me, if you are concerned for me, I repeat it to you, I presume to beg, Sabina, you will not constrain yourself on my account.

SAB. [taking him by the arm.] Well, I obey you, it is without struggle or constraint.

PHA. Ah, Sabina, would to heaven you could read what passes in my heart !

PHE. You will give us an account of that at the play ; come, let us go (Aside in going out.) Thank heaven Sabina begins to be reconciled to him.

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

SABINA, PHEDIMA.

PHE. You must allow that it is impossible to be more pleasing, more interesting.

SAB. I shall never recover from my surprize ; I could not have thought it possible for me to have accustomed myself to his figure.

PHE. That is quite natural ; you would not hear him ; you could not therefore know either the excellence of his disposition, or the charms of his conversation.

SAB. He has such goodness, such delicacy — He has even something very agreeable in his manner. — How affecting the sound of his voice !

PHE. So then you are no longer afraid ?

SAB. I esteem him too much to fear him — but that concern with which he inspires me,

makes me feel something sad and painful, which I cannot describe. Yesterday I had only that compassion for him which is due to the unfortunate, and I was grieved for his hard fate ; but that pity did not occasion the melancholy which engrosses all my thoughts at present ; I think of him in spite of me, and I cannot think of him but with inexpressible sorrow.

PHE. This is very extraordinary — yesterday he was much to be pitied, and to-day that you behave well to him, he is satisfied. Why then does your pity increase when his sorrows are lessened ?

SAB. There is an idea presents itself incessantly to my imagination, and torments me. — It is impossible to see him for the first time without astonishment and terror.

PHE. Well, what is it to him, if you have entirely got the better of that first impression ?

SAB. I wish to have justice done him ; I am grieved to think that the aspect of such a virtuous benevolent being, should inspire more dread and terror, than the sight of one of those savage animals in whom a blind ferocity is their sole instinct. — This is a dreadful idea, and I cannot think of it without shuddering.

PHE. But if you determine to remain in this palace, Phanor never will leave it ; he will see you only, and for your sake will renounce all the world.

SAB. I do not yet know, what my destiny may be ; I do not know, Phedima, whether I ought

to accept for life the asylum that is afforded us in this place.

PHE. And if you leave it, what will become of you?

SAB. I do not know. But it must be friendship, and not necessity, that can make me determine to remain here.

PHE. But will Phanor consent to separate himself from you?

SAB. Phanor is too generous to make any attempt upon our liberty.

PHE. For my part, I find myself so well here, that I am greatly inclined to remain.

SAB. What, Phedima, without me?

PHE. I shall remain to console Phanor.

SAB. Console him?

PHE. I have sensibility, he is grateful; my friendship will atone for your ingratitude, and in this manner, my dear Sabina, I shall make amends for your injustice, so you need not constrain yourself.

SAB. How different are our tempers, Phedima! every thing affords you a subject of raillery.

PHE. By no means; I do not rally.

SAB. I thought you did—— let us break off this conversation—— (aside.) I do not know what is the matter with me; I find myself out of humour——

PHE. You seem thoughtful.

SAB. Very true, I am so.

PHE. Do you wish to be alone?

SAB. Just as you please.

PHE. Adieu till evening, Sabina.

SAB. Where are you going?

PHE. For my part I am not thoughtful, I love to chat. I'll go and find Phanor.

SAB. As you think proper —— but I hope you will not acquaint him with the conversation we have had just now.

PHE. O I am discreet, I promise you I will not mention it.

SAB. That is all I desire —— But what will you say to him then?

PHE. You are very curious.

SAB. What, is it a mystery?

PHE. Perhaps.

SAB. O, I have no desire to discover it, I assure you.

PHE. If that is the case, I shall be silent.

SAB. [aside.] I can hold no longer.

PHE. Farewell, Sabina, when your reverie is over you will call me. —— (Aside.) I will now go to Phanor, and give him some useful advice. (She goes out).

S C E N E II.

SAB. [alone, after a short silence.] I could restrain myself no longer, I am glad she is gone. —— And is this Phedima? Is this the affectionate friend which was always so ready to sacrifice every thing to my happiness? What an astonishing change! It seems she prefers Phanor to me. —— I feel myself quite oppressed. —— (She sits down) My heart is filled with bitter affliction, and I cannot myself unravel what passes there. —— I really do not know. —— Yes, I will leave this place.

— Phedima may remain without me. — But to-morrow, perhaps this day, I withdraw from hence, never to return. Phedima will console Phanor, they will both forget me, and after all, I shall be the only one to be pitied. — Alas! I deserved another fate; I deserved other friends. — I have known misfortune, but I never suffered what I endure at present. I am frightened at the thought of it. — Somebody comes. O heavens! 'tis Phanor. — (She falls back upon a chair.)

S C E N E III.

P H A N O R, S A B I N A.

PHA. [aside.] I will follow Phedima's advice, and see what effect pity can have upon a heart of such sensibility. (He makes some steps forward, and stops.) Sabina, will you give me leave to approach?

SAB. [rising.] Yes, come, Phanor, I want to speak with you a moment.

PHA. What have you to say to me? Sabina, what are your commands?

SAB. (Aside) I cannot speak to him; I feel myself ashamed: (aloud) Phanor, I am afraid to distress you; there is a question I dare not ask.

PHA. Would to heaven I could divine what you wish, Sabina, your desires should be prevented.

SAB. I am attached to you by the sincerest gratitude--but after all, I cannot promise you I will always remain in this palace. — Phanor, will you leave me at liberty to quit it?

PHA. I understand you, and I will not com-

plain of the severe destiny which I see awaits me. This palacé, open to the unhappy, is an asylum, not a prison; you are not only at liberty, but you reign in it. I am nothing here but an unfortunate wretch, submissive to whatever laws you please to dictate, and ready to banish myself from hence for your satisfaction; but I beg at least you will do justice to my sentiments, and not consider me either as a tyrant or a ravisher.

SAB. You a tyrant, you Phanor! O Heaven, do you think me capable of entertaining the least doubt of your generosity? Alas! I may be at variance with myself, I may be inconsistent and irresolute; but know, Phanor, I never can be unjust to you.

PHA. Know then all my soul; I am but too sensible of the effect which my presence must produce; I know the invincible obstacle which a dreadful deformity opposes to my happiness; I never entertained the foolish hope of its being in my power to please you, and engage you to unite your destiny to mine: I have merited your esteem, that is sufficient, and after having obtained the only good that I could presume to expect, I ought to forget myself, and think only of you.

SAB. You terrify me; to what does this discourse lead? — Phanor, what is your purpose?

PHA. To make you absolute mistress of your destiny, and to free you for ever from what can either constrain or displease you. Receive this box, it contains a precious ring, by putting it upon your finger, you will find yourself

transported to whatever place you choose, and there, by the power of this same ring, every thing you wish will be realised; palaces, gardens, containing whatever is most beautiful in art or nature, of which you will be the sole mistress.

SAB. Take back your gifts, and deign to allow me to remain with you.

PHA. No, do not despise the last homage — or so sincere a passion. Farewel, Sabina, think sometimes on the unhappy Phanor.

[He goes out.

SAB. [alone.] Stop, stop — he escapes from me; Phanor, Phanor; I call in vain — O Heavens! a secret terror freezes my senses, and renders me motionless — his last homage, what means that mysterious expression? — What did he intend to say? — I shudder — some confused ideas have suddenly started to disturb my brain. — Perhaps this box which he has left in spite of me, contains an explanation of those forebodings which oppress me — I dare not open it. (She lays it on the table.) Ah! let me run to find Phanor, he alone can extricate me from my distress.

S C E N E IV.

P H E D I M A, S A B I N A.

PHE. Sabina, where are you running?

SAB. Ah! Phedima, have you seen Phanor?

PHE. I have just left him.

SAB. Well then?

PHE. I know what present he has made you,

and I come to ask what use you intend to make of it. I met Phanor distracted, out of his mind; the wildness of his manner frightened me; I wanted to speak with him, he shunned me, he fled from me, and quitted the palace in bidding me a sorrowful adieu.

SAB. What do I hear, O Heavens! — he has left the palace? — Where is he?

PHE. How do I know?

SAB. A thought strikes me. With that ring which he left me, I can transport myself to wherever he is — and there wish to be. (She takes the box and opens it.) Here is the ring; — But what is this I see? writing.

PHE. That writing will inform you of his destiny.

SAB. Ah! Phedima, I tremble. —

PHE. Come, read.

SAB. Alas! What am I to learn from this? (She reads it aloud.) “I wish to free you from a hateful object, I know that my presence must be disagreeable to you, and I cannot endure life absent from you, I therefore renounce it without reluctance. Farewell, Sabina, receive the last adieu of the faithful and affectionate Phanor.” (Sabina having read it.) Oh! I die. (She faints in the arms of Phedima.)

PHE. Oh Heavens what do I see! Sabina, Sabina!

SAB. He is no more — leave me, Phedima, your cares are vain. Life is hateful. — At last, when too late, I find in my heart. — O Phanor, I have dug your grave and my own. The wretched Sabina will immediately follow

you. Yes, Phanor, I loved you; I cannot exist without you. (While she pronounces these last words, soft music is heard behind the stage.) What do I hear? (The music continues.)

(The scene changes, and Phanor appears at the bottom, in his proper figure, seated on a throne of flowers.)

SAB. Where am I? What object is this I see?

S C E N E V.

SABINA, PHEDIMA, PHANOR.

PHA. [running to throw himself at the feet of Sabina.] Ah Sabina, my dear Sabina, recollect Phanor by the excess of his tenderness.

SAB. Phanor, O Heavens!

PHA. The oracle is fulfilled, I resume my original form, and it is to Sabina I owe my life and my happiness.

SAB. Ah! Phanor, how pleasing to dedicate our life to him, for whom we would sacrifice it!

PHE. What a happy day!

SAB. My dear Phedima, you increase our happiness by sharing it.

PHA. And I,—what do I not owe her?

PHE. Be always happy, and all my wishes will be gratified. [She addresses herself to the audience.] Ye feeling virtuous hearts, never complain of your fate, and may this example teach you to know, that goodness and benevolence are the surest means of pleasing, and the only claims to love.

THE END.

T H E
P H I A L S,

A
COMEDY,

In One Act.



THE PERSONS.

THE FAIRY.

MELINDA.

CLARA.

ELIZA.

The Scene is the Palace of the Fairy.





THE
P H I A L S,
A
C O M E D Y.

SCENE FIRST.

THE FAIRY, MELINDA.

THE FAIRY.

MY dear Melinda, for these three months since I saw you, the children whom you entrusted to my care, have given me a great deal of vexation.

MEL. What, my daughters?

FAL. Don't frighten yourself, the evil is not without remedy ; you know that I presided at their birth, but as my power is limited, I had but one gift to bestow upon them : it was left to my choice and I did not hesitate, I gave them tender grateful hearts. --

MEL. That was equally to serve them and

yourself ; for such a gift is worth all other gifts.

FAL. I repent not of what I have done ; virtue is preferable to beauty, but even virtue without a good heart is of little value. But to be happy, to be loved, a feeling heart is not sufficient. I have consulted the fates for the sake of your daughters, and I observed, that the happiness of both depends entirely on their preferring the qualities of the heart and understanding, to all the advantages of figure.

MEL. They are educated by you, therefore I have nothing to fear.

FAL. I give all possible attention to their education, but I must own to you, they do not keep pace with my wishes. Clara is gentle, and has a happy genius to learn, but she is conceited, indolent, and seldom gives application.

MEL. And her sister ?

FAL. Eliza has candour, sensibility and gaiety, but she is giddy, trifling, and violent ; added to this, they already have a great share of vanity ; they have been told they are handsome, and instead of receiving such a compliment as a common civility, they have taken it for a truth. They are not disagreeable, but they are very far from being beauties. — Judge then what they prepare for themselves !

MEL. My God ! What have they to be vain of ? They have great defects from nature, and to you they owe every advantage they possess.

FAL. However, I have been perfectly satisfied with them these two months ; I have found a method of humbling and punishing them.

MEL. How? —

FAL. I made them believe that I had rendered them hideous, and by my art I fascinated their eyes in such a manner, that either in looking at themselves in a glass, or at one another, they found they were frightful: I cautioned all who were about them, and every moment for the few first days, it was constantly repeated to them that they were dreadfully ugly; they at first cried bitterly, the youngest especially, Eliza, was quite inconsolable. I comforted them, and told them that the only thing they could do was to make their deformity be forgotten by their good qualities, their virtues and their talents; they believed me, and — but hush, I hear a noise, certainly 'tis the girls coming in search of you; I leave you together; farewell, do not forget to confirm them in their error.

[She goes out.]

S C E N E II.

MELINDA, CLARA, ELIZA.

[The girls remain at the door hiding their faces.]

MEL. Poor little dears, they dare not come forward; they are afraid I shall be shocked at the sight of them.

CLA. [Weeping.] Come, sister, there is no help for it; she must see us.

ELI. Do you go first.

CLA. I dare not.

VOL. I.

E

MEL. [Aside.] I must pretend not to know them. [Aloud.] Why don't my children come? I must go and find them. —

CLA. Do you hear that, Eliza?

ELI. I find that the fairy has not acquainted her with our misfortune. —

CLA. She looks at us without knowing us.

ELI. How can she, since we are so changed?

CLA. Cruel Fairy! —

MEL. [Approaching, and addressing herself to them.] Who are you? What do you want?

[Clara and Eliza draw near, both weeping.]
What strange figures!

CLA. [To Eliza.] Do you see how we terrify her?

ELI. We are much to be pitied.

CLA. Ah! I have never been so grieved at being frightful as now.

MEL. I pray you, young ladies, tell me, who are you?

CLA. and ELI. [Throwing themselves at her feet.] Ah, mama! —

MEL. What do I hear?

CLA. Yes, mama, we are your children.

MEL. You! good God!

ELI. Dear mama, pray acknowledge us; for notwithstanding our frightful change, our hearts are still the same.

MEL. [Raising them.] That is sufficient: I pity you for a misfortune which, however, may easily be borne, and you may be persuaded I shall not love you less.

ELI. What excellent goodness!

CLA. Well then, I am comforted.

MEL. Come, and embrace me, my dear children ; be but amiable, gentle and virtuous, and you will have no occasion to forget the trifling charms which you now want.

CLA. Mama, I am Clara.

ELI. And I Eliza.

MEL. I distinguished both of you by your voices.

CLA. The Fairy then did not tell you any thing ?

MEL. She concealed your ugliness from me ; she only informed me that you had given her great cause to be displeased with you, but for these two months she was delighted with your conduct.

ELI. We become accustomed to every thing : for my part, I am reconciled to my figure ; the time which I spent at my toilet, I employ now in reading, and playing on the harpsichord. —

MEL. That is what you must have done, if you had been beauty itself.

CLA. We daily repeat to ourselves, that we have only lost a little sooner what we must necessarily have lost in course of time, and thereby gained reflexion and instruction, which perhaps we should never have known but for the change.

MEL. This is a most happy way of thinking.

ELI. It is much more agreeable to please by the charms of the temper and understanding, than by those of the person ; and if I can attain to the power of pleasing as I now am, I

shall be more delighted than if I was still handsome.

MEL. Still handsome! — Did you really think you were ever handsome, Eliza?

ELI. I may now tell what I thought, for it is like speaking of another person.

MEL. Let me hear then.

ELI. Well, mama, though my features were not regular, I was very agreeable, and really handsome.

MEL. My dear child, you are mistaken; you were not ugly, but your figure was exceedingly ordinary.

ELI. You say so to lessen my regret; indeed, mama, you are very good.

MEL. No indeed, I suppose you are so reasonable as not to have any regret. And, Clara, did you think you were charming too?

CLA. O no, mama, but —

MEL. Go on.

CLA. I thought my features more regular than agreeable, and I should rather have preferred my sister's.

MEL. Very well, you thought you were handsome: truly my children you were both fools — my dear girls, you had both of you figures that were passable, rather good than bad, that's all.

ELI. That is not what we were told.

MEL. You must know the world, and distrust yourself; but you should not hate it, because you are to live in it; and you ought to make yourself esteemed in the world, because you will be judged by it.

ELI. If the world is deceitful, I will fly from it.

MEL. It deceives only those silly fools who are blinded by vanity. It is sometimes unjust, but it recovers from its prejudices ; it has more of levity than wickedness, and is more trifling than dangerous : in short, it is not contemptible, for it always honours and respects virtue, and even in tolerating vice, exposes and punishes it. The greater the number of people collected together, the more faults and irregularities will be found ; therefore, in suffering from those of the world, we should excuse them.

ELI. That requires great generosity !

MEL. It requires only justice. Are you without faults ? Do not you need the indulgence of others ? You ought certainly to grant what you yourself require.

ELI. I have great faults, but I am only a child, and will diligently endeavour to correct them.

MEL. Indulgence is of the number of the virtues, and stamps a value upon all the rest ; so of course, perfection even does not excuse you from it, but quite the contrary.

CLA. It seems to me likewise, that it is much better to be silent, than to make ourselves uneasy ; we should detest wickedness, and shut our eyes as much as possible against that which we cannot prevent.

MEL. A want of indulgence is always accompanied with contention and ill-nature ; let us shun the wicked, but let us pity them, and

learn to live with them, if it must be our fate. They are rather deserving of compassion than contempt.

CLA. Pray, mama, explain to me what it is to be wicked, for I do not rightly understand it.

MEL. My dear, what is meant by a wicked person, is one who has a bad heart, incapable of any sort of tenderness, that loves nothing.

CLA. Ah, mama! you are right to say that they are to be pitied. They can never be happy.

MEL. Wicked people are rarely to be met, though wickedness is common, and is usually the effect of a want of understanding, idleness, and levity.

ELI. What! can they be guilty of wickedness without being wicked?

MEL. That happens every day. With good hearts and many amiable qualities, there are people who suffer themselves to be led into most guilty errors.

ELI. But how, mama?

MEL. By faults, trivial in appearance, but dreadful in their consequences: by ill-founded vanity, giddiness —

ELI. Giddiness! Ah, mama, you make me shudder. What, I may one day — O, sister, let us correct ourselves.

MEL. Nothing is more easy; you need only to reflect, and have a sincere desire to amend.

CLA. O! I will apply without intermission.

MEL. Such attention, my children, will secure both your happiness and mine. But who is this coming to interrupt us? Ha! it is the Fairy.

S C E N E III.

FAIRY, MELINDA, CLARA, ELIZA.

MEL. Come, madam, and receive my best thanks ; I am delighted with Clara and Eliza ; they are indebted to you for a degree of reason and sensibility, which makes me very happy.

FAI. I am happy to find you are pleased.

MEL. I am chiefly so from their promises, and the hopes they give me of correcting all their faults.

FAI. Well, I am ready here to offer them a sure and speedy means.

MEL. What is it ?

CLA. and ELI. O say what is it ?

FAI. Hear me attentively : To rid you of a ridiculous vanity, my dear children, I have been obliged to render both of you frightful. Of all advantages beauty is the least valuable, though I own that to have a disgusting figure is disagreeable ; however, if I can give you every virtue, and all the charms of understanding for your portion, you will have made a good exchange. But I mean to leave all to your own choice, and therefore come to make you the following offer. I have compounded for each of you two phials, which contain a divine essence, the one of which will carry off your deformity and restore you to your former looks ; or, the other will bestow upon you every quality of the heart and understanding, in which you are deficient. But you must

choose one of them, for I cannot give you both ; my power does not extend so far.

ELI. What a pity !

FAL. Here are the phials—[She takes the phials out of a box.] This one, of a rose colour, will, by drinking it, make your ugliness disappear ; and, in like manner, the white will make you perfect.

MEL. Well, what say you ?

CLA. Mama, 'tis you should advise us.

FAL. No, no ; you must decide for yourselves.

ELI. Let me see that rose-coloured one.

MEL. Eliza——

FAL. [To Melinda] I pray you be silent.

ELI. I only wanted to look at it. [The Fairy gives her the phial.] How agreeable it smells !

FAL. We will leave you by yourselves to consult together, and in half an hour shall return to know your answer.

CLA. Ah ! do not leave us.

FAL. It is absolutely necessary ; we must not constrain you.

ELI. If we drink both phials ?

FAL. It will have no effect, the mixture will destroy their virtues. Here, Clara, here are your two phials ; and, Eliza, here are yours. Adieu.

ELI. The rose colour will restore our original form.

FAL. They are properly marked, so that you cannot mistake in case you determine before our return. Come, let us leave them.

MEL. My dear Clara ; my dear Eliza !——

FAL. [To Melinda] Come, once more follow me. [She says to Melinda aside in going out] One moment longer, and you would have spoiled my experiment. [They go out.]

SCENE IV.

CLARA, ELIZA.

CLA. [After a short silence] Well, sister !

ELI. Well, Clara !

CLA. What shall we do ?

ELI. We must reflect on what we are about.
[They both sit down and place their phials on a little table.]

CLA. The Fairy herself owns, it is a great misfortune to have a disgusting figure.

ELI. And alas we are frightful !——

CLA. What then ?

ELI. The hazard is great——Here is a looking-glass upon this table.

CLA. I'll lay a wager that is a malicious trick of the Fairy. A looking-glass at present is only a dangerous temptation. Eliza, let us not look in it.

ELI. That is a delightful scruple ; it is always good to have a looking-glass to consult.

[She places the looking-glass upon the table.]

CLA. Let us only consult our reason.

ELI. We should hear the opinions of all the world. [She looks at herself in the glass.]
what a figure !

CLA. Ah, sister, you are going to choose the rose-coloured phial.

ELI. [Still looking at herself] I never saw my ugliness so extraordinary, so hideous — Certainly, Clara, yours is not so disagreeable.

CLA. Till now you seemed to me to think quite the contrary.

ELI. That was because I did not examine myself attentively. I only do myself justice; surely your figure is not so shocking as mine.

CLA. What an idea !

ELI. In the first place you are not so crooked as I am.

CLA. I don't think so.

ELI. [Still looking at herself.] I am by far worse-coloured than you are.

CLA. I don't see that.

ELI. But look, examine both our figures in the glass, and you will allow it.

CLA. [Leans and looks at herself] Oh, I am a thousand times more frightful than you.

ELI. How shall we decide, Sister ?

CLA. I do not know — this glass has unsettled all my ideas. [She looks again.]

ELI. The Fairy might very well say that it is impossible with such countenances ever to appear in the world.

CLA. Under such a disgusting exterior, who will ever look for understanding or a good disposition ?

ELI. We and our internal perfections will be left to take care of ourselves.

CLA. Besides, cannot we correct our faults

ourselves, without the help of the white phial ? 'Tis true, it will not be so speedily.

ELI. But we need not be in such a hurry.

CLA. To be sure we are very young.

ELI. Come, come, let us no longer hesitate.
[She takes the rose-coloured phial.] Here, sister.

CLA. Give it me——

ELI. [Uncorks hers, and Clara sinks into a reverie.] Clara, what stops you ?

CLA. Eliza !

ELI. What is the matter with you, you tremble ?

CLA. Ah, sister, what are we going to do ?

ELI. You cannot determine for yourself ; come then, I will set you the example.

CLA. [Snatching the phial from her.] No, dear Eliza, you should take it from me, I am oldest.

ELI. And I the most reasonable.

CLA. Hear me, I pray you : If we prefer that phial, we shall distress mama.

ELI. Ah, if I thought so, I would rather break it.

CLA. Well, sister, you may depend upon it ; I observed her anxiety when she left us ; she trembled for fear we should make an imprudent choice.

ELI. Indeed I recollect the last look she cast upon us at parting ; it was very tender and melancholy.

CLA. That look should teach us our duty ; we must follow it.

ELI. Our deformity is not so grievous, as our mama is dear to us.

CLA. She and the fairy only desire our happiness.

ELI. [Taking the phials.] Let us sacrifice ourselves for her. Here, dear Clara.

CLA. [Taking the phial.] I no longer hesitate to choose this. [They both drink]

ELI. [After having drank.] Now I have accomplished it.

CLA. [Looking at her sister.] What do I see! ———

ELI. Ah, sister, you have resumed your original figure.

CLA. And so have you! ——— My God, can we have mistaken the phials?

SCENE V.

FAIRY, MELINDA, CLARA, ELIZA.

FAI. Take courage, my dear children. ——— Come, and embrace us.

MEL. [Embracing them.] Clara! Eliza! ——— how I love you!

CLA. Then we are happy. ——— But by what prodigy did the white phial ———

FAI. After the decision which you have just made, we must not look upon you as children. I shall no longer deceive you; all that has happened to you, was done only to try you. Your affection for your mother and me, has got the better of your vanity; such a sacrifice was the work of reason and sentiment, and you may

judge whether or not we esteem it, and if our hearts are sensible of its full value.

ELI. But shall we always have the same faults ?

MEL. In choosing the white phial it was almost a proof that you did not need it.

CLA. [To Melinda and the Fairy.] You are satisfied ; then we ought to be so.

MEL. You have got rid of your deformity, and you are dearer to us than ever ; this is what you have gained by your good conduct. Never forget, my children, that in every event in life, the most worthy and virtuous resolution is always the best and most certain of success.

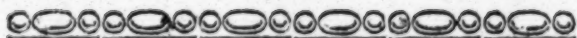
T H E E N D.

H

T H E
H A P P Y I S L A N D,

A
C O M E D Y,

In Two Acts.



THE PERSONS.

ASTERIA, the brilliant Fairy.

MELISSA, the benevolent Fairy, her sister.

The Princess ROSALIDA, pupil of Asteria.

The Princess CLARINDA, pupil of Melissa.

LAMIA, Princess Rosalida's maid.

The Scene is in a Palace.



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THE
HAPPY ISLAND,
A COMEDY.

ACT I.
SCENE FIRST.

L A M I A.

WHAT a racket in this palace ! all the world are impatiently waiting the close of this day, which must decide the fate of the Happy Island : the people are anxious, they are inquisitive, and I believe the fairies and the young princesses are in violent agitation. For my part, being engaged these three days in the service of the Princess Rosalida, all my wishes are in her favour ; however, I dont know if she will prevail over Clarinda. It is said that Rosalida has a good understanding, accomplishments, and a superior degree of merit ; but

she is haughty and capricious ; she is flattered, and praised, and, perhaps admired ; but Clarinda is beloved, and I am afraid — I hear some one coming. O 'tis my young mistress.

SCENE II.

ROSALIDA, LAMIA.

ROS. At last I have got away from that tiresome crowd which has been distracting me these two hours — Ha ! Lamia, are you here ?

LAM. Well, madam, is the hour for the coronation fixed ?

ROS. Yes ; the queen of the Happy Island will be proclaimed at six o'clock this evening.

LAM. [Kissing the bottom of Rosalida's robe.] Let me then be the first to pay her homage.

ROS. What folly, Lamia. — Do you not know that my fate is uncertain, and that Clarinda may be crowned ?

LAM. I know, madam, that your pretensions are the same, but your titles are different.

ROS. No, you deceive yourself ; the deceased queen of this Island, on her death-bed, appointed, as regents of her dominions, the two fairies, who have bred up Clarinda and me ; while she begged them to take charge of our education, she at the same time desired, that when we should have attained the age decreed by the laws, they would form a council of the old men and sages of the island, who, by a plurality of voices, should choose the one of the

two whom they deemed the most worthy of being elected queen.

LAM. But, madam, have you not a nearer claim to the throne by your birth ?

ROS. No, the claims of Clarinda in this respect are likewise the same ; we were both related to the deceased queen, but in so distant a degree, that the proofs of each party were equally obscure. The queen having no other heirs, did not choose to decide between us, but by the prudent dispositions of which I have just now given you the particulars, she found means to settle a just precedence, since she has only left her dominions to the one who shall be found most worthy to govern.

LAM. Ah, madam, how happy for you was such a ———

ROS. Very well, Lamia, I forgive you that stroke of flattery, it is not ill-turned ; but don't have recourse to it too frequently ; for praises have not always the gift of pleasing me ; however, I own I love flattery, but I warn you before hand, that I am very hard to be pleased.

LAM. In presuming to offer them, it is not intentionally ; they escape, and therefore you should excuse it.

ROS. Lamia, you don't want for sense ; I perceive that we may agree.—Have you seen the Fairy to-day ?

LAM. No, madam, she is so busy preparing for the coronation.—It is for you she is employed. ———

ROS. There will be great many entertainments.—I am tired of entertainments.

LAM. It is true, the Fairy every day endeavours to procure you some new amusement ; she loves you excessively !—but that is so natural ! —————

Ros. Again !—I begin to tire of this eternal insipidity. [aloud] Lamia, leave me. [Lamia moves to the bottom of the stage, where she remains.]

Ros. I dismissed Zelis because I found her giddy ; I could not keep Fatima, Zerbina, nor Zirphy—and I begin already to be dissatisfied with Lamia—is the fault in me or in them ? —To see constantly new faces, without being able to engage the affections of one !—Alas ! notwithstanding all the cares of the Fairy, I feel that I am not happy. ————— [She sits down upon a chair and falls into a reverie.]

LAM. [approaches softly and says] Madam !

Ros. What ; what do you want ?

LAM. I thought you called me.

Ros. No, I did not call ; but stay.—Go, and bring my harp—Stop, I will rather read.—Lamia, have you any accomplishments ?—

LAM. I could draw and sing formerly, and I plainly tell you with such success, that I fancied I had attained the greatest perfection.

Ros. Well. —————

LAM. Ah, madam, I have been undeceived since I have had the happiness to be with you.

Ros. Have you seen the last drawing I gave the Fairy ?

LAM. Alas, madam ! yes I have seen it ; the Fairy has caused it to be put up in the grand gallery : I spent two hours in examining

it this morning, and on returning to my chamber, I threw all my sketches, crayons and pencils in the fire.

ROS. Some verses, pretty enough, have been made upon that drawing ; have you seen them ?

LAM. Yes, madam, but I do not like them ; it is true that I am never satisfied with the encomiums made upon you ; I always find there is something wanting.—But the door opens, 'tis certainly the brilliant Fairy Asteria ; yes, 'tis she.

ROS. [going to meet the Fairy] Lamia, leave us.

LAM. [aside in going out] I pray Heaven that Rosalida may be queen ; she loves flattery ; I have discovered her weak side, and I am sure from henceforth, of governing her as I please. [She goes out.]

S C E N E III.

THE FAIRY ASTERIA, ROSALIDA.

AST. What is the matter with you, my dear Rosalida, you seem melancholy !

ROS. I own to you, Madam, I am a little out of humour at present, —

AST. Why so ? Are you uneasy on account of the election that is to be this evening ? —

ROS. O no, by no means, it is not that ; and what engaged my attention when you entered does not deserve. —

AST. No matter, I desire to know it. —

ROS. Well then, madam, since you desire it ;

I was thinking of the young girl whom you have lately placed with me.

AST. Does not she suit you?

ROS. I have no good opinion of her disposition; if you knew with what meanness and insipidity she praises me,

AST. O! is that all? but my dear child, your modesty makes you take plain truths for flattery, I assure you; I tell you sincerely I am proud of my work, and it is certain, thanks to Nature, and more especially to the education I have given you, you are perfectly accomplished.

ROS. Accomplished! Dear madam, in all sincerity I cannot believe it.

AST. I know it well, and this proves the perfection of my work, for if you did yourself justice, one virtue would be wanting.

ROS. However, I have a great deal of pride.

AST. [laughing.] Yes, be always perfectly persuaded of that.

ROS. [quickly.] Yes madam, I have a great deal, and since you oblige me to speak out, I find no one preferable to myself; is that being modest?—You laugh, you think I exaggerate; no, I only speak what I think—and yet notwithstanding this excessive vanity, I am almost always dissatisfied with myself; how can you reconcile this?

AST. She is charming! Come to my arms, my dear Rosalida. If you are not pleased with yourself, who ever can have reason for self-approbation?

ROS. I do not complain of nature, she hath

given me a feeling grateful heart ; I ought to praise fortune for giving me such a benefactress as you ; but say what you will, madam, I have faults which escape your notice, because you love me, and in spite of me I am sensible of them myself, because I am a sufferer.

AST. She is always dwelling upon her faults. I wish my sister, who thinks you so vain, and is incessantly telling me of the surprising humility of Clarinda, could but hear this conversation. In short, this day, my dear Rosalida, this very day, the fairest of my life, your destiny is going to be fixed according to my desire ; I shall this evening see you queen of the happy island ; my joy shall know no interruption, unless from the pain my sister must feel, for she has the folly to form the most flattering hopes for her pupil : could you conceive a blind partiality carried to such an extreme ?

ROS. I cannot judge of the merit of Princess Clarinda ; I know her so little, and have seen her so seldom, though both of us have been educated in this palace. —

AST. As my sister's ideas of education were totally opposite to mine, I would not for that reason consent to your being intimate with Clarinda ; but, at present I think it is proper you should form a particular intimacy, since she who shall be queen, ought to love and protect the other. —

ROS. Ah madam, all the good I have heard spoken of Clarinda, has for a long time inclined my heart to love her —

AST. Yes indeed, she is truly engaging ; she

has no shining qualities, but she is gentle and good ; and tho' she was born with but middling understanding, if I had undertaken to educate her, I should have made her a charming woman. My sister told me she would introduce her to you this day. But Rosalida, you don't attend ; you are absent.——

ROS. 'Tis very true, madam,—I was thinking on something you said a little while ago of the benevolent Fairy Melissa.

AST. What of her ?

ROS. You said, she thinks I am vain ; and this returns to my imagination, I do not know for what.——

AST. Well, what then ?

ROS. I should be glad to know upon what grounds she founds such an accusation : I never boast of myself.

AST. O by no means, quite the contrary.—

ROS. I never speak of myself ; I hate and avoid praise—upon what then does she judge that I am vain ?——

AST. Because she certainly thinks you possess all those qualities which might give occasion for it.

ROS. But she positively said that I was vain.

AST. It is undoubtedly from jealousy she depreciates your talents and agreeable accomplishments ; for example, that last drawing which you made, and certainly it is a masterpiece, that she looked at it not only without enthusiasm, but praised it with a negligence, a coldness.—

ROS. I own I feel myself hurt at such in-

stances of averſion ; I cannot bear to be treated with injuſtice — it diſguſts and afflicts me, and puts me quite beſide myſelf.

AST. Be calm, my child. The poor little dear, ſhe has tears in her eyes ; how affecting !

ROS. [with a forced ſmile] Who I, ma'am ! I aſſure you I do not feel the leaſt tendency to melt into tears ; I am only grieved at having diſpleaſed the benevolent Fairy : I have ſhewn my ſurpriſe, for I have done nothing to draw ſuch a miſfortune upon myſelf ; but otherwiſe, I proteſt to you, I do not feel the leaſt anger or reſentment.

AST. O I am convinced of it ! — but what does Lamia want ?

SCENE IV.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA, LAMIA.

LAM. [to the Fairy] Madam, the ambafſadors of King Zolphir are juſt now arrived, and demand an audience.

AST. My ſiſter muſt be acquainted — but here ſhe comes, and Clarinda with her.

[Lamia goes out.]

SCENE V.

The Fairy MELISSA, ROSALIDA, CLARINDA, the Fairy ASTERIA.

MEL. Clarinda, go and embrace Roſalida, and aſk her friendſhip.

ROS. [coming forward] May you, my dear Clarinda, desire it with the same sincerity with which it is granted.

CLA. I promise you the love of an affectionate sister, and my heart expects the same from you.

AST. [to Melissa.] I believe they will be happy to converse without witnesses. Will you give them leave to go together to my closet?—

MEL. I have no objection. Clarinda, follow Rosalida.

[The young princesses take each other by the arm, and go out. Rosalida, in passing Melissa, curtsies to her with a look of haughtiness and disdain.]

SCENE VI.

THE TWO FAIRIES.

MEL. [looking at Rosalida as she goes out.] By my being a Fairy, I possess the art of reading in the eyes, and can pretty nearly guess the thoughts. I observed a violent resentment against me in the eyes of Rosalida. What can be the reason?

AST. Let us leave that, my sister, and speak of business of more consequence. Do you know that some ambassadors are arrived?

MEL. Yes, and I gave orders to let them know we shall see them after the coronation.—

AST. What do you imagine is the subject of their embassy?

MEL. These same ambassadors were here about eight months since, and then they must have heard of the election, which you know should have happened six weeks ago.

AST. Yes, indeed, it has been delayed.

MEL. I imagine they conclude it is already over, and are come from their master to compliment the new queen.

AST. Well, sister, tell me truly, what at the bottom of your heart are its forebodings on the decision that must be made this evening?

MEL. I can easily guess yours, but I beg leave to conceal mine; you have a greater share of spirits than I, and——

AST. To deal plainly then, you imagine Clarinda will be preferred?

MEL. I have employed all my care to render her worthy of it.

AST. And for fifteen years I have been engaged solely in the education of Rosalida.

MEL. You have given her many accomplishments; you have adorned and cultivated her understanding, and it is but doing you justice to declare it.

AST. And her heart, principles, and sentiments?

MEL. I cannot judge of them; I do not know them.

AST. For my part, I cannot judge of the accomplishments and understanding of Clarinda; for I do not know them.

MEL. You may at least judge of her benevolence, her gentleness, her even temper and good sense. I believe nobody will hesitate to

allow her these good qualities. The choice of a queen this day depends upon the esteem and love of the people ; so, sister, I cannot be without some hopes.

AST. So you think superiority of talents hurtful in a princess born to reign ?

MEL. True superiority consists in gaining the hearts of the people, and is the only superiority which I admire.

AST. And you do not believe that merit creates hatred and envy ?

MEL. A feeling heart, an equal and gentle temper guards the possessor from hatred ; and when no vain display of accomplishments is made, envy, even in discovering them, extinguishes itself, or knows how to be silent.

AST. In short, I believe Clarinda perfect, since you say so ; but her reputation is not so splendid as it should be ; her name is scarcely known, whilst that of Rosalida is celebrated even in countries the most distant from this island.

MEL. I don't know, sister, what Clarinda's reputation may be beyond this island, but I am certain she is beloved by all who approach her.

AST. And Rosalida is admired by all who either see or hear her. —

MEL. But who is this coming to interrupt us ?

AST. Lamia, what do you want ?

S C E N E VII.

ASTERIA, MELISSA, LAMIA.

LAM. [giving a letter to Melissa.] Madam, this letter was carried to your apartments, and I was desired to deliver it into your own hands ; the ambassadors who are just arrived, hoped for an opportunity of presenting it themselves from the king their master ; but as they know you will not see them till the evening——

MEL. That is sufficient, Lamia. [Lamia goes out. Melissa opens the letter, and reads it to herself.]

AST. Why is this letter only for you, sister ? —May we not at least know the contents ?—

MEL. [after having read it] Nothing important ; I beg you won't desire to know the particulars.

AST. So then, you have secrets !

MEL. No, sister ; but I wish you would excuse me.

AST. That letter is from King Zolphir ?

MEL. Yes, it is.

AST. Why this mystery then ?——it is injurious, and I cannot conceive——

MEL. [giving her the letter.] Since you will read it, with all my heart.

AST. [reads aloud.] “ I know, O Melissa, “ thou prudent Fairy, that the queen of the “ Happy Island must be already chosen ; from “ all I have heard by my ambassadors, of the “ incomparable Clarinda, and from all that “ public report has said of her benevolence and

"singular good qualities, which with the en-
 "thusiastic regard the people of the Happy
 "Island have for her, I cannot entertain a doubt
 "of her being already placed upon the throne
 "of which she is so deserving. Receive then,
 "O great Fairy, the assurance of the sincere sa-
 "tisfaction I feel upon the occasion, and deign
 "to inform the new queen, that she cannot
 "have a more faithful friend and ally than the
 "King.

"ZOLPHIR."

This is certainly the most extraordinary and impertinent letter —

MEL. Do you imagine, sister, that I ought to be offended?

AST. Raillery is very ill-timed at present.

MEL. Dear sister, I pray you don't put yourself out of humour. We have different interests; but you promised me that they should not occasion a quarrel between us.

AST. In short, the fate of Clarinda and Rosalida will be decided in two hours, and I expect that important moment with the greatest impatience.

MEL. And I expect it with perfect tranquillity. Here come our pupils; let us leave them together, and go to give our last orders for the coronation.

[Melissa goes out.]

AST. Rosalida, let me find you in the great gallery in half an hour; I have still some instructions to give you.

[She goes out.]

SCENE VIII.

ROSALIDA, CLARINDA.

ROS. Instructions!—It is probably something relating to the ceremony of the election, for otherwise I don't think I have much instruction to receive.

CLA. You are very accomplished then?

ROS. People are bad judges of themselves; but you have just now heard me sing and play upon different instruments; you have likewise seen my drawings; what is your opinion?

CLA. I thought all was charming, and I said so; but at my age one is not capable of being a good judge; our knowledge must be so imperfect, so limited.——

ROS. At your age!—Don't you know that we are the same age?

CLA. Yes, I know it.

ROS. Well then—you see, however, that at our age it is possible to know something.

CLA. Yes, that is what I said.

ROS. But you don't allow a superiority?

CLA. O no.

ROS. [aside.] I believe indeed she is right.
— [aloud.] I have got a dreadful head-ach.
Are not you sometimes out of humour?

CLA. Out of humour, what is that? is it not vexation, disquiet?——

ROS. Yes, vexation without a cause.

CLA. Without a cause!—I know it not.

ROS. [shrugging up her shoulders, says aside.]

She knows nothing. How badly she has been educated! — [Aloud.] Has Melissa made you learn any foreign languages?

CLA. O yes, she has taken all imaginable pains in my education.

ROS. [aside] So it seems. — [aloud] I know four languages; how many do you know?

CLA. Much the same.

ROS. And perfectly?

CLA. O by no means; I know nothing perfectly.

ROS. [looking at her attentively.] She is at least modest. — What a sweet look! [Clarinda smiles.] What do you laugh at, Clarinda?

CLA. I don't know.

ROS. [still looking attentively.] She has a certain timidity, which is wonderfully engaging. — Clarinda, are you much afraid of the ceremony this evening?

CLA. Much afraid! — no. —

ROS. Do you know the ceremonial?

CLA. Yes, almost. We are to be conducted into a great hall, where each of us is to make a short speech, and then the council of old men and fages are to declare. —

ROS. It is so, except the shortness of the speech, for mine will last three quarters of an hour. —

CLA. Indeed! —

ROS. Yes, at the least.

CLA. I am glad of it.

ROS. You are very obliging.

CLA. I shall certainly be much diverted with it —

ROS. [aside.] How silly she is! — (Aloud.) It will divert you then? — I do not believe to divert is the proper word to express what is meant.

CLA. Excuse me, no other word can express my idea. — I find there is a something in your manner, in your air, and in every thing you say, which I cannot express; that I never saw in any one but you, and is to me very entertaining.

ROS. Upon my word, this is a kind of encomium quite new to me. —

CLA. But is it really an encomium? — I had no such intention.

ROS. I indeed imagine your language frequently does not correspond exactly with your intentions, and that without art or deceit; for certainly you could not be suspected, you have such a gentle unaffected manner. —

CLA. And as to me, I do not take that for an encomium; am I wrong?

ROS. Yes, for I really think that candour and innocence are painted on your countenance.

CLA. But if your intention was not perfectly consonant with your language —

ROS. Do you know that you have a great deal of understanding; natural understanding I mean?

CLA. And pray what understanding is it that is not natural? — Perhaps you could teach me. —

ROS. Really one would be tempted to think at present, that she understands finesse. — But

let us return to your speech; is it very elegant?

CLA. I have prepared no speech.——

ROS. O, you speak off hand.——

CLA. Just so.

ROS. And your Fairy advised you to do so?

CLA. She positively commanded me.

ROS. That is surprising. But tell me, my dear Clarinda, what sort of a life have you led hitherto?

CLA. I have always been so happy, that I could not look but with dread upon any change that might happen to me.

ROS. I was doubtful whether you had any ambition; but if you are declared Queen this evening?——

CLA. I shall dedicate my whole attention to the means of justifying the choice the council shall have condescended to make.

ROS. I am much pleased with your answer; but I am sorry, Clarinda, that I can only amuse you, while you make a much more lasting impression upon me, and interest me deeply in your favour.

CLA. I do not flatter myself that there is a great conformity in our dispositions and understandings, but I am confident that our hearts may suit each other.——

ROS. I'll lay a wager that the Fairy Melissa has prejudiced you against me.——

CLA. You know her but little; — she is not capable of it.

ROS. Yet I know, she in many respects disapproves of the education given me by the brilliant Fairy.

CLA. That may be, but I have never heard her mention it.——

ROS. That may be—and if it was so, do you think she judges right?

CLA. Melissa never can be wrong. If you knew how just, sagacious, and good she is—

ROS. You love only her.——

CLA. No; but I love her as I ought, I prefer her to all the world.——

ROS. And who do you love besides?

CLA. Zemira, the companion, the friend chosen for me by Melissa, and who is to me what Lamia is to you.

ROS. [confused.] Lamia has only been two days with me.

CLA. Can you have lost your friend? And have I had the imprudence to renew your grief? ——

ROS. No.—Clarinda, let us change the subject.

ROS. Rosalida, what is the matter with you? I have given you pain without intending it.——

ROS. [sorrowfully.] You deserve to be loved, Clarinda; I am not surpris'd that you have had a friend from your infancy; but for my part I have none.

CLA. I will be your friend, my dear Rosalida.——

ROS. [aside,] How good and engaging she is!——and I ridiculed her.

CLA. I pray you banish this melancholy, it grieves me.——

ROS. Every word she speaks melts and pe-

netrates me to the heart. Clarinda, let us promise that whatever may be the decision of our fate, we never shall part.

CLA. O, I make that vow with transport.

SCENE IX.

ROSALIDA, CLARINDA, LAMIA.

LAM. [to Rosalida.] Madam, the Fairy waits you.

ROS. Come then, we must part, my dear Clarinda.

CLA. Let me at least see you to the door of the gallery.— (They go out.)

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA.

AST. Judge of my surprize at reading the letter.

ROS. I own to you I share it, and this great renown of Clarinda's surprises me infinitely. It is with pleasure I do justice to her good qualities; she is, as you said, gentle, amiable, and engaging; but I do not think she possesses that turn of mind which can inspire admiration and rapture.

AST. She has no talents, nor superiority of any kind. I am likewise persuaded that this pretended renown does not exist; her affability must have gained the hearts of the Ambassadors, who have undoubtedly drawn a most exaggerated picture to their master.

ROS. I do recollect indeed, that during their first embassy I scarcely saw them; their strange awkward manners disgusted me, and I even took the liberty to laugh at them openly.

AST. We need look no farther; that explains the enigma, and will bring down a little of the vanity of my Sister, who triumphs in secret, notwithstanding all her modesty.

ROS. She triumphs! — O then she takes the letter quite seriously?

AST. She did not shew the least surprise, I assure you.

ROS. Indeed!

AST. In short, the discovery approaches, and we shall triumph in our turn. —

ROS. Are the Ambassadors of King Zolphir to be present at the ceremony of the election?

AST. Certainly; I gave orders to desire their attendance.

ROS. I own to you, Madam, that of all things in the world, I could wish the master himself to be present.

AST. Nothing can be more easy, and you have suggested an excellent idea to me. By the power of my art I can without difficulty —

ROS. Ah, Madam, you are very good! —

AST. Not only Zolphir shall be there, but likewise all the Kings and Princes who are the

neighbours of this Island. It is my desire, my dear Rosalida, that the assembly where you are going to appear, and to be elected unanimously, shall be the most august and splendid in the universe. Do you remain here, while I go to my closet to employ the resources of my art in such a way as shall gratify both your wishes and my own, and I will return to you presently. [she goes out.]

Ros. [alone.] I don't know what is the matter with me to-day, but I feel a strange uneasiness, which I never experienced before. — Since I have seen Clarinda, I am more dissatisfied with myself, yet I believe I am superior to her; and I truly think so, when I reflect and draw the comparison — but when I cease to reason, and kearken only to the feelings of my heart, all that merit of which I am so proud seems to vanish, and I wish to resemble Clarinda. She engages, she attracts; she captivates, and I find that I already love her sincerely.

SCENE II.

LAMIA, ROSALIDA.

LAM. [running.] O Madam, I have been to see the grandest and most noble sight perhaps in the world.

Ros. What is it?

LAM. It is the coronation-hall. Only conceive old men, princes, kings, and sages, all collected in one place — such a spectacle is not common. — I am struck with admiration!

ROS. [aside.] The moment approaches, and in spite of me, I feel disturbed. —

LAM. There is a noise, an uproar in the gardens and galleries, which increases every instant; hearken, don't you hear the cries? — Certainly some extraordinary accident must have happened.

ROS. I think I hear them repeating the name of Clarinda. — Go and see what is the matter, Lamia. —

LAM. [goes to see, and returns.] It is the Princess Clarinda crossing the galleries to come hither.

ROS. And why these redoubled cries?

LAM. 'Tis a multitude of poor people who were waiting for her going past; it is said she is very charitable. — (A cry is distinctly heard, behind the scenes.) Long live the Princess Clarinda, long live our generous benefactress!

Good heavens, what a crowd! — all the unhappy people who have been succoured by Clarinda, are certainly assembled.

ROS. They are offering up their prayers for her; they are right. Ah such prayers deserve to be heard. — [They cry nearer and louder:] Long live Clarinda, long live our dear benefactress! —

How has she had the happiness to be useful to so many people? For my part, I never saw any unhappy people in the palace!

LAM. It is said she went in search of them.

ROS. Ah, Asteria! — you might have led me to them! — (Aside.) I feel myself quite

oppressed ; never was my mind filled with such bitterness ! —

LAM. Here come the Fairies and the Princess.

SCENE III.

ROSALIDA, LAMIA, MELISSA,
ASTERIA, CLARINDA.

[The two Fairies carrying a Crown set with diamonds.]

ME. The decisive moment is at last arrived. — Here is the crown, which in less than an hour we must place with our own hands upon the head of the Queen of the Happy Island. — (They lay it on a Table.) Rosalida, if it is your fate to be called to the throne, I swear by that friendship which unites my Sister and me, to continue to love and protect you, and never to employ the powers of my art, but for your glory, and the happiness of your dominions.

ROS. Alas, every thing that I hear this day only serves to perplex me ! —

AST. Clarinda, it is with pleasure I bind myself to you by the same vows ; and you, my Sister, who know my heart, you know whether I shall be faithful.

MEL. O, I have no doubts. — Rosalida and Clarinda, the assembly wait you, go. —

CLA. [to Melissa.] What ! without you ? —

MEL. Yes ; from the dread of constraining the votes of the council, my Sister and I shall remain here : go then, my children.

CLA. Come, my dear Rosalida, and do not forget the promises you made me. —

ROS. [in giving her her arm.] Ah, if it was not for fate, and the Fairies that oblige me to contend with you for the throne, how happy should I be to yield it to your virtues!—

CLA. Nobody can think you more deserving of it than Clarinda!

MEL. Go, my dear children, and shew the assembly, that now expect you, not two rivals, but two friends, who are too noble and too generous, to let either interest or ambition disunite them.

ROS. Give me your arm, dear Clarinda.—
[Aside in going out.] I tremble, and can scarce walk.
[They go out, Lamia following.]

S C E N E IV.

MELISSA, ASTERIA.

MEL. [after a short silence, during which she looks attentively at her Sister, who is in a deep reverie.] Well, Sister?—

AST. You know my thought; I will not attempt to conceal the agitation I feel at this moment, and with the same sincerity I must tell you, I begin to suspect your hopes for Clarinda are not without foundation.—She is universally beloved, and I have just now seen unquestionable proofs of it.—Perhaps, this general esteem will obtain the crown for her; if that be the case, I must allow you have chosen the most certain means for placing her on the throne;—but pray does she possess those brilliant qualities which alone can render a reign memorable and glorious?

H 2

MEL. I did not wish Clarinda to have any reputation but what I believed to be the most solid; that of goodness and benevolence.

AST. That may be sufficient to carry the election, but not to reign with splendor. How shall Clarinda, who I allow is good, but simple and inexperienced, without instruction or taste for the arts, be capable of discerning merit, encouraging abilities; in short, how can she know men, or judge of them so as to employ them successfully?

MEL. But, Sister, did I ever tell you that Clarinda was simple and uninstructed?

AST. Have you cultivated her understanding, have you given her accomplishments?

MEL. Yes, Sister, I have.

AST. Clarinda accomplishments!

MEL. Yes, Sister. ———

AST. You are in raillery, sure. ———

MEL. No, I tell you nothing but the plain truth.

AST. But what does she know then?

MEL. All that Rosalida knows.

AST. But, Sister, how comes it about I never heard it mentioned before? ———

MEL. I wished her to have accomplishments, not to proclaim them to the world, but for her own amusement, and the amusement of her friends; they are not a source of any vanity in her, she does not seek admiration, and she is not envied.

AST. Say what you will, I very much doubt of the excellence of her abilities; she has so little spirit! ———

MEL. You deceive yourself again, Sister ; Clarinda has a great deal of spirit.

AST. Wherein does she shew it ?

MEL. Yes, Sister, she has infinite spirit ; I allow that she can neither banter, dissemble, nor harangue ; she never turns simplicity and ignorance into ridicule ; she does not think it an unpardonable crime to be deficient in what is called the customs of the world : yet she knows and follows all these little covenants ; but at the same time they appear so trifling, that to her it seems very natural some of them should frequently be forgotten. The only thing which strikes her in a ridiculous light, is caprice, of which she has no conception, and laughs at it very naturally ; for she has all the ingenuoufness of her age. She reflects much and judges soundly : perhaps it will never be said that she is captivating, but the better she is known, the greater will be the pleasure to hear her, and the zeal to consult her.

AST. I own to you, you astonish me. —

MEL. I hear a noise — some one comes, we shall have news. —

AST. Ah heaven—it is Lamia, and joy sparkling in her countenance. —

Well, Lamia. —

SCENE V.

ASTERIA, MELISSA, LAMIA.

AST. [to Lamia.] Is the Queen chosen ?

LAM. No, Madam ; but if I dared to foretell the event——

MEL. Speak without constraint.

LAM. You desire it, Madam ?

MEL. Yes, speak out.——

LAM. [to Asteria.] Ah, Madam, how shall I describe to you the amazing success of the Princess Rosalida, the astonishing effect produced by her speech ; with what a noble graceful manner did she harangue the assembly ! by her eloquence and charms she gained the universal suffrage ; redoubled acclamations obliged her to stop ten times ; at last, when she ceased to speak, the applause with which the hall resounded had not suffered the Princess Clarinda to begin, when I came away to acquaint you with the happy news.

AST. I am very sensible, my dear Lamia, of this proof of your attachment. Go back to the Princesses ; I hope we shall soon see them.
(Lamia goes out.)

SCENE VI.

ASTERIA, MELISA.

MEL. Do not restrain yourself, my dear Sister ; give vent to your joy.——

AST. If I thought it could be offensive to you, I would not yield to my feelings.

MEL. No indeed, Sister, personal considerations shall never make me unjust.

AST. Indeed, Sister, I love Rosalida as you love Clarinda ; therefore you may imagine I

cannot hear the hopes which have been given me, without being delighted.

MEL. The sentiment is quite natural; besides Rosalida in many respects deserves your affection: I only find fault with her caprice and vanity; but she has a good understanding and a good heart, and can easily correct her faults.

AST. She has an excellent heart, you may depend upon it.

MEL. I believe it, and I have this day seen several proofs of it which convince me.

AST. You delight me—ah, dear Sister, this unchangeable goodness, this perfect equity which you possess in such an eminent degree, engages and wins all my confidence. Though I believe at this instant that Rosalida has carried the prize from Clarinda, you have opened my eyes, and I see that the education you have given your pupil renders her more worthy to reign. I was misled by vanity; I was desirous that Rosalida should be admired, and directed her self-love only to trifling objects; undoubtedly all her faults she owes to me, I feel and own it: but at this instant however, while I am condemning myself, she is perhaps crowned! Clarinda is adored for her benevolence, and a thousand good qualities; but those of Rosalida, though not so solid, are more brilliant, and even the sages, seduced and subdued by them, place her upon the throne. — Indeed, Sister, I cannot but believe that what dazzles men, will always influence their conduct.

MEL. Then, they never attend to their hearts.—But what noise is this?—

AST. Ah, the Queen is chosen!—I hear the voice of Rosalida!

MEL. Let us take the Crown, it is we that must give it. (The doors are thrown open, Clarinda and Rosalida come forward, Lamia following.)

SCENE VII.

ASTERIA, ROSALIDA, CLARINDA,
MELISSA.

(The Fairies move forward to take the Crown.)

AST. Rosalida!—

ROS. Go, dear Clarinda, and receive the reward of your virtues.

AST. What do I hear!—what! Clarinda?—

ROS. Yes, Madam, she is Queen, and by the unanimous voice of the people.—(To Melissa.) Ah, Madam, if you had but seen with what general acclamations she was proclaimed! She no sooner had begun to speak, than compassion and emotion penetrated every heart. Every sentence of her noble affecting discourse will remain indelibly engraven upon my memory: every eye was fixed upon her, and filled with tears; mine likewise flowed; I partook of the general enthusiasm with which she inspired the audience, and with transport added my suffrage to that of the whole assembly.

CLA. O Rosalida, thou feeling, generous friend!—

AST. You have gained, dear Sister, enjoy your triumph ; do not be afraid of afflicting me, I admire your work, and my heart without reluctance must applaud the just success with which it is rewarded. Come, thou amiable and virtuous Clarinda, come and receive the Crown.

CLA. My dear Rosalida—I cannot accept it, but in sharing it with you.

AST. O heaven ! —

ROS. Who I ! —

CLA. Yes, it is my irrevocable resolution.

ROS. No, no, you alone deserve it.

CLA. I make you an offer of what I myself would have accepted ; if you love me as much as I love you, Rosalida, you will not hesitate.

MEL. Reign both of you ; fulfil the wishes of the people, who could not have placed Clarinda upon the throne without regretting Rosalida ! —

ROS. After the choice they have made, what more can they desire ? — Ah ! this day has taught me to know myself too well to let me regret the loss of a throne, which I now blush for having presumed to claim.

CLA. You have nothing to blush for, but the offence you offer to friendship by your cruel refusal.

MES. Rosalida, if your soul is as feeling as it is great and noble, you will not oppose the happiness of your friend ! —

ROS. Ah, Clarinda ! —

CLA. The council continues assembled for the ceremony of the coronation ; come, my dear Rosalida, join your friend in ascending that

throne which becomes valuable by your deigning to partake it.

ROS. You command it, I therefore obey.—

CLA. You gratify all my wishes.

ROS. But you must always remain my guide and my model ; teach me your virtues, and, if possible, make me like yourself, or you will have done nothing for me.

AST. Continue, my dear children, to enjoy the happiness of which you are so deserving ; and remember, that the greatest talents and most brilliant accomplishments, are only useless or dangerous, if unaccompanied with modesty, goodness, and benevolence.

THE END.

THE
SPOILED CHILD,
A COMEDY,
IN TWO ACTS.

VOL. I.

I



THE PERSONS.

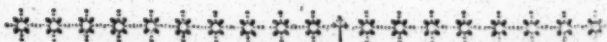
MELINDA, a Widow.

LUCY, her Niece.

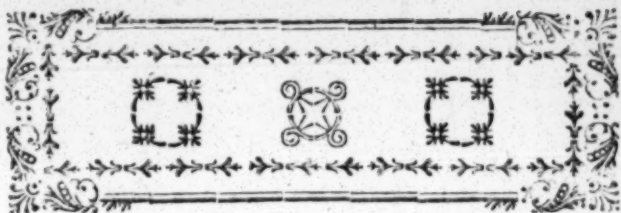
DORINA, Lucy's Mistress of Music and
Drawing, and living with Melinda.

PHILLIS, the Daughter of Melinda's Maid,
and educated with Lucy.

The Scene at Paris, in Melinda's House.



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T H E
S P O I L E D C H I L D ,
A C O M E D Y .

A C T I .

S C E N E F I R S T .

The scene represents a Study, with books,
globes, &c.

M E L I N D A , D O R I N A .

M E L I N D A .

MY dear Dorina, I have been a long time desirous of a particular conversation with you, about my niece ; and I wish you would deal candidly with me. I placed you with her, not only to improve her heart and understanding, and teach her some agreeable accomplishment.

ments, but above all things, to tell me the truth, and assist me to know her disposition.

DOR. It is my misfortune not to be able to conceal my thoughts; but, Madam, such is your own penetration——

MEL. I penetrating! by no means; that is precisely what I am not; then, such is the life of dissipation I lead, that it leaves me no time to reflect. — I love the world, but I love my niece still more; and if I had been better instructed myself, I would have given up all other pursuits with pleasure, to have dedicated myself entirely to the education of Lucy.

DOR. Nobody is more capable, Madam—

MEL. No, no; I do myself justice, when I own that I have no abilities, and that I know nothing; I had masters when I was young; but I was educated in a convent, which is the best excuse I can offer for my ignorance. In short, Lucy is, beyond expression, dear to me: I am a widow, I have no children, and she is my only heir; I would not leave it in her power to reproach me on a future occasion, for that negligence, of which, in the bottom of my heart, I could not help accusing my friends a thousand times, in their conduct towards me.

DOR. Miss Lucy is very deserving of your affection; she is a charming girl.

MEL. That is what you are incessantly repeating to her, and what I frequently say myself; and we are both wrong, for we spoil her.

DOR. Ah! Madam, it is not such a disposition as hers that is to be spoiled.

MEL. 'Tis true, she is more womanly than is common at her age—for example, that ease with which she mimicks every body, is what I never saw but in her.

DOR. And as yet she is not fourteen.

MEL. Certainly she is very promising; but to all her natural charms, I wish to add great talents and a good heart: without talents, people languish, time hangs heavy, as I have dearly experienced. To pay and receive visits, is a pleasure of which one very soon grows tired!—yet, that is the great resource of people who have no object to pursue. In short, I wish she may have a feeling mind, because without that, nothing can be enjoyed, and 'tis always an excellent resource when beauty is no more. Then it is with pleasure we think friends are more to be valued than admirers.

DOR. You have such a fund of moral reflections, Madam, I am always happy in hearing you.

MEL. I hope that Lucy, instructed and educated by you, will have still more; and that study and reading will give to her understanding, what is wanting in mine.

DOR. And the rather, as she has such application, memory—and natural taste.—

MEL. Yes, she has a great deal of taste, which is visible even in the smallest things.—I believe she will dress in good taste.—She already dresses her head very gracefully—but I did not think she gave great application.

DOR. Too much, perhaps, Madam, for her health; she has such delicate nerves—

MEL. She takes that after me—you always tell me you are delighted with her, that she learns wonderfully; yet, after all, what does she know?

DOR. She is so young.—

MEL. When I am present at your lessons, I own to you, that her inattention and your indulgence always provoke me.

DOR. But, Madam, I have already accounted for it to you; your presence either intimidates her, or engages her attention; she looks at you, thinks of you, and —

MEL. My dear Dorina, you flatter me.

DOR. My God, Madam, it was but yesterday I found fault with her, for having played so badly on the harpsichord when you were present; she said, it was because my Aunt was opposite to me, and I don't think that in the world there are such beautiful, expressive, brilliant eyes as hers—

MEL. [in a tone of severity.] Lucy told you so?

DOR. Word for word, and with that simplicity, that graceful manner, so natural to her.—

MEL. [in the same tone.] Do you really think to impose upon me, by this ridiculous flattery.

DOR. What, Madam, do you think me capable?

MEL. Hear me. I believe you have a thousand good qualities; you have understanding, abilities and have been well instructed; but, for heaven's sake, if you desire that we should

continue to live together, do not praise me ; I hate encomiums, and I always suspect them.

DOR. Modestly always accompanies superior merit.

MEL. Again ! —

DOR. Let us say no more about it ; but I beg you will believe, that my attachment to you and your niece is boundless, and that—

MEL. Prove it to me, then, by seconding my views. There is one thing more I must require of you : it is, that you will pay some attention to the education of that little girl who has been bred up with Lucy. —

DOR. Phillis ? —

MEL. Yes, she is an orphan, and the daughter of a woman who was fifteen years in my service, and recommended her to me on her death-bed ; besides, this young creature has the sweetest temper, and the happiest disposition : you observe how she improves by the instructions you give to Lucy ; she draws, she plays on the harpsichord all the day long ; I am not a judge to know whether it is successfully ; but that desire to improve at her age, makes her very engaging.

DOR. I shall obey you, Madam ; but I own to you I have no great idea of her genius,

MEL. She is gentle, ingenuous, feeling, and sincere ; when with people to whom she owes respect, she scarcely speaks till she is asked, and then her answers are always pertinent ; she excels in every thing she does ; she is reserved, discreet, assiduous, and grateful ; she makes herself beloved. If it is true that she

can be all this without genius, you will allow, that genius is an advantage which one may very easily forego. (She looks at her watch) But in chatting, I forget that it is past twelve o'clock, and that I am to have twenty people to breakfast with me, who must be already come.

DOR. Is there not to be a reading party here to-day?

MEL. Yes, indeed, which will keep us till four o'clock; and I want to go to the new opera, for I have bespoke a box. Lucy is coming to learn her lesson, and you may tell her, that if you are satisfied with her, I will take her with me to the opera. Farewell, my dear Dorina; do not forget this conversation; and justify, by your conduct, the confidence which I place in you. [She goes out.]

SCENE II.

DOR. [alone.] What a fool!—knotting, going to public places, and receiving visits, are her sole employments. She is always praising to her niece, the charms of study, and the advantages of application; but the example she sets, is eternally in direct opposition to her discourse. Then, at other times, hearkening only to a blind affection, she fancies her niece to be a little prodigy of perfections, and praises her exceedingly; to please her, every body says as much; but she no sooner turns her back, than they laugh at this little girl; who, in short, is vain, intractable, giddy, and will never learn any thing. Besides, what is it to me? I flatter her,

I take no notice of her whims, and I make myself loved by it: she will get married; she will be rich, and make my fortune, that is all I want.—But hush, I hear some one coming;—O, 'tis Lucy.

S C E N E III.

DORINA, LUCY.

LUCY. I thought my Aunt was here?

DOR. She is this instant gone; and desired me to tell you, that if you learn all your lessons well, she will take you with her to the opera.

LUCY. To-night?

DOR. Yes.

LUCY. And 'tis the new opera?—O, I am delighted! My God, I wish I had known it sooner.

DOR. Why so?

LUCY. Because my head is most horridly dressed.—And my new gown—I shan't have it till to-morrow!—it is very provoking, you will allow.

DOR. No matter how you are dressed, are not you always sure of being admired?

LUCY. Nay, but this is railery!—I set so little value on all these things. Do you think the trimming of this gown genteel?

DOR. It is charming.

LUCY. Yes, but it is a little faded.—I like the rose-coloured gown I wore yesterday better. What do you think?

DOR. I think, that in whatever I see you dressed, that seems to me always the prettiest.

LUCY. Shan't I have the dress before dinner?

DOR. And our lessons?

LUCY. That is true.—Come, come, I'll remain as I am; it is so much trouble saved, and I mortally hate dressing.—Well, what shall we do?

DOR. Your dancing-master is coming, and when you have danced, we will draw, and then play on the harpsichord.

LUCY. O, it is impossible I can dance to-day; I slept so ill, and am so languid, that I can scarce stand upon my legs.—

DOR. You had best sit down then. [She reaches her a chair; and Lucy sits down, and stretches herself carelessly.]

LUCY. I have really such a dreadful languor.

DOR. Indeed you seem quite dejected.

LUCY. You, seriously then, think I am changed?

DOR. Exceedingly.

LUCY. That is perhaps owing to the shocking trim I am in this morning. — I am positively determined to have my head dressed again before the opera. — Does not my Aunt give a breakfast to-day.

DOR. Yes; and there is to be a reading party.

LUCY. Well, when I am married I will have reading parties and breakfasts too—these breakfasts are charming.

DOR. Yes, it takes up from mid-day till four o'clock.

LUCY. Then, public places, suppers, balls ; that is what is called enjoying life. What a happy woman is my Aunt ! — Well I will have my turn.

DOR. But in the mean time you should cultivate your understanding ; if one happens to get tired of public places, or balls become fatiguing, or company disagreeable, it is a great satisfaction to be able to enjoy one's self.

LUCY. But don't you see my Aunt preserves all the desires of her young days ; why should not I have the same constancy ? And why should I, by laborious studying, give myself up to certain vexation, to procure distant resources, of which perhaps I shall have no occasion ?

DOR. But, Madam, does not your Aunt herself lament every day, how much her education was neglected ? She gives herself up to dissipation more from habit than taste.—

LUCY. It is true, she yawns at the play, she has the vapours constantly after all her breakfastings, and the megrim always after she has been at a ball or the opera. Yes, that is true. — I am very sensible, that talents and instruction may be of some advantage—then, to be accounted ignorant, that is mortifying, it shocks me I must own. [She sinks into a reverie.]

DOR. You are thoughtful ?

LUCY. Yes, I feel some efforts of reason which grieve me ; you have just now told me some things with which I am struck. — What is the reason, my dear friend, that you have not always spoken to me in the same manner ?

DOR. I was unwilling to vex or contradict you.

LUCY. Don't you think that by taking more pains than I have done, I might at least in time have the appearance of some talents?—a superficial knowledge is all that I desire.

DOR. And is it not believed that you have that already?

LUCY. Yes, but between you and I, I know nothing.

DOR. O, that is being too modest; you play very prettily upon the harpsichord.

LUCY. Alas! only three or four pieces which I know by rote.

DOR. You draw very well; your last head is charming.

LUCY. Thanks to you for that.

DOR. No, truly, I scarcely touched it.

LUCY. But I know not one word either of history or geography.

DOR. You know the titles of a number of books, and that is enough for the world; boldly declare that you have read them all; with this, and a book in your work-bag, and another on your toilet, maintain that you have a passionate love for reading, and you will very soon pass for being deeply learned.

LUCY. That is a droll way of being learned, and suits me wonderfully. Well, I will adopt it, and then, my dear friend, you will always continue to live with me; you will correct my drawings, and even my pictures, when I come to paint; so that I shall have one accomplishment certain.

DOR. Persist, Miss, and I promise you all those which are common in society. The true, the very eminent talents, are so uncommon in people of your condition!

LUCY. That is precisely the reason which makes them desirable.—Phillis will really have them;—I wish to resemble her.

DOR. Upon my word, a very whimsical wish.

LUCY. I love Phillis, I am not jealous of the advantages she has over me; but I see them, and there are moments when that thought gives me pain.

DOR. That is being very blind indeed, both as to her and yourself. You have an uncommon genius, and the happiest turn for improvement; as to Phillis, the little girl is capable of abundant application, but notwithstanding her little thoughtful look, and her dry ironical manner, she is in fact but very shallow.

LUCY. No, don't deceive yourself; Phillis, with her gentle innocent manner, does not want genius.

DOR. I own you are very capable of judging, but you are so indulgent—perhaps my opinion is owing to the comparison I am constantly making between you and her; but she displeases me exceedingly.

LUCY. I am sorry for it, because I love Phillis.

DOR. She has a certain rusticity however, a sourness in her temper, which cannot be very consonant with yours.

LUCY. It is true, she says things a little bluntly; it vexes me sometimes, and then I forgive her.

it is very extraordinary that her sincerity should be offensive to me. If Phillis was less free, she certainly would be more agreeable, but perhaps I should not have the same confidence in her. I cannot explain how it comes about, but I find, the more she contradicts me, the more I am attached to her.

DOR. If that is the case, Miss, I am exceedingly unfortunate, for I love you to such excess, that I cannot bear to offer you the least contradiction.

LUCY. For that reason, my dear friend, I love you still better than Phillis; you appear to me a thousand times more amiable than Phillis. I would wish to consult her sometimes, but I should choose to pass my life with you.

DOR. Well, I am satisfied with my portion; but however, I am afraid it is not the most solid.——

LUCY. Depend upon it, my affection for you shall be as lasting as it is tender. — But who is this coming to interrupt us? O, it is Phillis.

SCENE IV.

PHILLIS, LUCY, DORINA.

LUCY. What do you want, Phillis?

PHIL. Miss, your dancing-master is come.—

LUCY. I shan't dance to day; you have only to give him a ticket, and send him away.

PHIL. But, Miss, you sent him away last time without taking a lesson.——

DOR. Well, what then—would you have Miss dance in her present condition?

PHIL. What is the matter with her?

DOR. She has; she has a dreadful languor.

PHIL. All that I know is, she was perfectly well half an hour ago, and was jumping in the garden. —

LUCY. That is because I don't incline to give way to my feelings; I am not delicate—but the fact is, I am indisposed, and I won't take a lesson of dancing.

PHIL. The last fact seems certain, and I readily believe it. Well, I will go and give him his ticket.—There is money well laid out.

[She goes out.]

LUCY. [after a short silence.] When I reflect, I think it will be right to take a lesson of the dancing-master. —

DOR. Shall I call back Phillis?

LUCY. What do you advise me?

DOR. But—not to fatigue yourself.

LUCY. Besides, I shall dance longer to-morrow.

DOR. Surely, and that will be the same thing, and as to a lesson more or a lesson less, what does it signify?

LUCY. My dear friend, you are so gentle and indulgent!—But what has brought Phillis back again?

PHIL. [returning.] Miss, your Aunt wants you.

LUCY. The reading is not begun then?

PHIL. No, Miss, and there are several Ladies who wish to see you for a little. You are

desired to bring your portfolio with your drawings.

DOR. There it is. [Lucy takes it.]

LUCY. [to Dorina.] My dear friend, do you wait here for me. Adieu; I am mighty glad to go and take a turn within. [She goes out running and jumping.]

SCENE V.

DORINA, PHILLIS.

PHIL. [looking at Lucy going out.] The languor seems to go off, I think.

DOR. [smiling.] You believe then that she has exaggerated a little? —

PHIL. Yes, Ma'am, and you think so too.

DOR. [in a dry manner.] Where did you learn that? can discover what are your thoughts, and I see that you suspect Miss Lucy of artifice and falsehood; but for my part, I am very far from entertaining such an opinion of her.

PHIL. It requires no great address to discover my thoughts, for I declare them very plainly; but I can frequently observe that there are people who wish to disguise theirs.

DOR. Of whom do you say this, pray?

PHIL. Ah, that is my secret.

DOR. You may keep it; I have no desire to know it: but there is one thing of which I wish you to be informed; that is, if you will be so good as to change the manner of speaking, you have assumed of late, not with me, for I am absolutely indifferent about what you say, but

with Miss Lucy. You forget yourself truly ; your behaviour to her is insupportable ; you censure without reserve every thing she either does or says. It really seems as if you held her in detestation. If you persevere, I tell you beforehand, that I shall acquaint her Aunt with it ; I think it an indispensable duty.

PHIL. You have too much good sense, Ma'am, to go such lengths without having previously heard my vindication. In the first place, nobody can be more attached to Miss Lucy than I am ; I have not the happiness to please her ; yet I love her, because, in spite of every obstruction I meet with, I think she is good, she has great sensibility and candour. When she does amiss, it does not proceed from herself. When she does not speak the truth, when she is harsh, proud, or capricious, all these faults are infused into her ; they are not natural to her, for her disposition is excellent. In like manner, when I blame her, it is not her that I censure. — You must conceive what I mean ; I express myself badly, and perhaps I speak a little obscurely, but if you please, I will endeavour to explain myself better.

DOR. 'Tis enough. The consequence will shew you, that I have understanding sufficient to conceive your meaning. But some one comes. [Aside, looking at Phillis.] What a dangerous little creature ! we must get her packed about her business.

SCENE VI.

DORINA, PH'LLIS, LUCY.

LUCY. [She enters running, and throws her portfolio upon the table.] O! I am quite out of breath?—My God, what a number of people within! O my dear friend, what a charming gown I saw just now.

DOR. Whose is it?

LUCY. 'Tis Mrs. Bercy's. It is just a Polonese, but trimmed with peach-flowers, in such taste and elegance. — I never saw a trimming of peach-flowers before. O 'tis beautiful! — Mrs. Bercy has a fine fancy!

DOR. It were only to be wished, that she was a little handsomer.

LUCY. She is a gay woman.

DOR. Yes; but it is said, she puts on white.

LUCY. Indeed! —

DOR. O, I don't believe it. — However her forehead is very shining.

LUCY. Ha, ha, 'tis very droll to have a shining forehead. —

PHIL. Yes, some people put on white. It is a rule worth remembering. For example, your great Uncle certainly puts on white. —

LUCY. Such nonsense! —

PHIL. Bless me, the rule must be false then, for his forehead is much more shining than Mrs. Bercy's.

DOR. [to Lucy.] What did they say of your drawings?

LUCY. They thought them charming, especially the old man's head.

PHIL. But that was entirely done by Miss Dorina.

DOR. Not at all ; I only sketched it, and gave it some expression.

PHIL. Very true ; you only did the outline and the finishing.

LUCY. [with a forced smile.] Phillis does not spoil me.

PHIL. To flatter is to deceive ; how can we deceive those we love ?

LUCY. With this manner, Phillis, you shall always say to me whatever you please.

DOR. Is Mrs. Surville one of the company ?

LUCY. Yes, with her daughter, who is more stiff and upright than ever.

DOR. O, I believe Miss Flora is very proud of being one at a reading party.

LUCY. I promise you she is ; yet she is but two years older than I, and is such a pedant.—

PHIL. I am told she is a prodigy, she has acquired such knowledge.

DOR. [ironically.] A prodigy !—and who told her so ?

PHIL. Not she by whom she is educated, but by all who know her. For my part, I can assure you, she has a great deal of modesty ; for she never speaks of herself, and always endeavours to stamp a value upon the merit of others.

DOR. It is true, that she pays a particular attention to Miss Phillis ; and every time she comes here, praises her great abilities.

PHIL. No, Miss, she does not lavish ridiculous and exaggerated praises upon me ; she has too much good sense to be obliging at the expence

of truth ; but she always makes me admire her good nature.

LUCY. My dear Phillis, I believe Miss Flora really has a great deal of merit, but I can't conceal from you, that I think she has the misfortune to be a pedant.

DOR. [laughing.] Yes, yes ! a pedant is the very expression ; it is admirably hit off. And a pedant at sixteen !—What charms does it not promise in future !

PHIL. [to Lucy.] But Miss, may I presume to beg you would inform me in what she is a pedant ?

LUCY. In what ?—Why, in every thing.

PHIL. But I beg you will be so good as to mention some instances.

LUCY. O, I'll mention a thousand.

PHIL. One only, if you please.

LUCY. She has a pedantic manner, a certain way of pinching her mouth, and when she comes into a room—Stop, do you wish to see her ?—that is she. —

DOR. [laughing.] Perfectly, perfectly, 'tis she herself.—Once more, I pray you—This is delightful. —

LUCY. Then, when she sits, it is just so—on the edge of the chair—she looks mighty serious ; turns round as if she had no joints—and every now and then a little cough.—

DOR. Oh, the little cough is admirable !—'Tis she herself.—My God, I think I see her—except that she has not that shape, nor that countenance.

LUCY. [laughing.] Phillis is vexed. She don't laugh.

PHIL. I hear, I look on, and I am instructed. I had formed to myself a quite different idea of pedantry. I imagined that it chiefly consisted in seeking occasions of shining in company, in making quotations, and deciding boldly. But your definition is much more simple. — To have a tender breast, and to sit on the edge of a chair; that is what makes a pedant: I will remember it.

LUCY. [laughing.] Really, Phillis is nettled. — Well Phillis, since you love Miss Surville so much, I promise you I won't laugh at her any more; it will cost me some pains to restrain myself, but I give you my word on it—come, don't pout.

PHIL. But tell me, Miss, what has she done to you, that you should hate her?

LUCY. I don't hate her.

PHIL. However, you say all the ill of her you can; and if you will be sincere, you will own, that you exaggerate what appears to you ridiculous in her; what more could hatred do?

LUCY. But—do you think, Phillis? — you have made me uneasy by what you have said—yet I do not attack her reputation.—

PHIL. If you were capable of any thing so black, is there room for it? Is not Miss Surville a model of gentleness, modesty, and goodness? Would any one listen to you, if you said otherwise? —

LUCY. [to Dorina.] My dear friend, she terrifies me.—My God, is what I have done so very criminal?

DOR. How childish to reproach you for a little innocent raillery, which can only appear dangerous in the eyes of Miss Phillis. A great harm indeed in your mimicking Miss Flora: she has only to retort it upon you; certainly you would not be offended.

LUCY. By no means; on the contrary, I shall be very much pleased. Yes, I shall be glad to have her retort upon me, that we may be quit: for, I don't know why, but that jest oppresses me at present, in spite of me.

PHIL. As to Miss Surville, I assure you, she pardons you with all her heart.

LUCY. How! does she know that I take her off?

PHIL. Several people have told her of it; she mentioned it to me, and I could not deny it.

LUCY. Well, what did she say?

PHIL. She laughed heartily.

LUCY. She laughed.

DOR. From the teeth outward, I believe.

PHIL. Then she reproached herself for having laughed: for, said she to me, it is rather a cause of pity; that young girl, who thinks she is only making diversion, gives a bad opinion both of her heart and understanding; and these same people, who seem to be entertained with her humour, judge her with as much severity for this trifling offence, as if she was already arrived at the years of reason.

LUCY. She said so?—She thinks so?—

PHIL. O, she is truth itself.

LUCY. I will have 'an explanation with her.
—I will justify myself, or at least repair my

fault.—Phillis, do you think she believes I have a bad heart ?

DOR. Let us have done with this conversation, which is really void of common sense. You must go to dinner, and lose no time, for we still have all our lessons to get before the opera. [To Lucy] Come, Miss, what are you so thoughtful about ?

LUCY. I am vexed to death.—I have no appetite ; I won't dine.

DOR. If you are really sick, you had better lie down : you won't go to the opera.

LUCY. Well, I will go and sit at table. Phillis, give me your arm.

[She goes out with Phillis.]

DOR. [seeing them go out] Miss Phillis, you ruin all that I do, but I'll be even with you.

[She goes out.]

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

MELINDA, LUCY, who looks sad and thoughtful.

MELINDA.

I AM happy, my dear, that I made you come back a second time to the saloon ; your success gave me inexpressible pleasure.

LUCY. Yet I played very badly on the harpichord.

MEL. O, I assure you, every body was delighted with your accomplishments.

LUCY. Ah! dear aunt, are these encomiums very sincere?

MEL. That doubt does credit to your modesty; but keep up your spirits, my dear, and depend upon it, when you please, there is no degree of praise to which you may not be justly entitled.—Farewell, my dear girl, you must finish your lessons; I am going to send Dorina to you, and in a couple of hours I will be back to take you with me to the opera.

[She goes out.]

LUCY. [alone] How she is blinded in my favour by her affection!—Alas! she has done every thing that depended upon her to procure me an excellent education—And what return have I made for all her tenderness?

SCENE II.

LUCY, DORINA.

[Lucy sits down, and seems thoughtful.]

DOR. Well, Miss, you have captivated every one; there is nothing spoken of within but your accomplishments, and your graceful manner—but why this melancholy, thoughtful air? What is the matter with you?

LUCY. If you knew what I have heard, and what I discovered by accident!—

DOR. What is it?

LUCY. After having sung and played upon the harpsichord, I went down to the garden;

and passing along the great covered walk, I heard my name pronounced, upon which I stopped, and was concealed by the trees.

DOR. You overheard the conversation ?

LUCY. Without any intention, and even in spite of me, I did not miss a word.

DOR. Well, what did they say of you ?

LUCY. Whatever was severe, or could be inspired by the most galling criticism : in short, I heard those very people who had just before loaded me with encomiums in the saloon, tear me to pieces, and ridicule me without mercy. Only one, however, took my part, and that in the strongest and most generous manner. You will guess who it was ?

DOR. I die with impatience to know.

LUCY. It was Miss Surville.

DOR. Well !—But are you very sure that she had not a glimpse of you across the walk ?

LUCY. I am very certain of it ; she was not on the same side with me. I own to you, that this goodness from her, humbled while it affected me, and occasioned a kind of distress which I cannot describe, and which the malevolence of the rest could not cause. The deceitfulness of these people, inspired me rather with contempt than either anger or vexation ; but the generosity of Miss Surville, provoked me against myself, and in proportion as she spoke, I felt my tears flowing. It seems, that it is more painful to see one's self convicted of injustice, than to experience it from others.

DOR. Miss Flora's behaviour on the occasion was certainly very good ; but you may likewise

believe, that the desire of appearing to advantage in the eyes of the rest, and affecting a good disposition, had some share in it.

LUCY. Granting that to be true, she still had the merit of taking the best means of being esteemed ; and that is a great deal.

DOR. However, Miss, we must think of our lessons. Where shall we begin ?

LUCY. I don't know. — I feel such a sadness, such a despondency to-day, as I never experienced before.

DOR. The conversation you have heard is the cause of this little discontent. But, Miss, do you desire to hear something that will very much astonish you.

LUCY. What is it ?

DOR. It is, that all this abuse which was levelled against you, is at bottom only a most flattering triumph for you.

LUCY. How so ?

DOR. Yes, this criticism, you may depend upon, it, is the effect of jealousy.

LUCY. You think so ?

DOR. O, I promise you it is. If you were less handsome, less amiable, and had not so much wit, they would do more justice to such promising talents.

LUCY. What a villainous thing is envy !

DOR. You will see more of it in time. You may expect to be hated by the women, who will never pardon your superiority over them.

LUCY. Women, in general, then have very little spirit. — It seems to me, that if I were capable of that humiliating vice you mention,

I would employ all my attention to conceal it, and my vanity at least would prevent me from being unjust.

DOR. You need not grieve at an evil which is inevitable. Consider, that the hatred of the envious is a secret proof of their admiration, and that their malignity only serves to set off the lustre of that merit which they wish to depress.

LUCY. Hatred !——I have no idea of what can inspire hatred.——For, my part, I shall never hate any one ; I am confident of it.

DOR. Comfort yourself ; you will only be hated by the wicked ; feeling hearts will adore you.

LUCY. [embracing her] How amiable you are, my dear friend ; you drive away all melancholy thoughts ; they are immediately dispelled if you are present.

DOR. Come, let us think no more of the invidious, but prepare for the opera ; and, that you may be sure of going there, let us get rid of our lessons. Well, will you play on the harpsichord ?

LUCY. I have no relish for the harpsichord to-day.

DOR. Besides, it is not in tune ; therefore, if you please, we will sing,

LUCY. Most willingly.—But I have a cold in my head, and a very sore throat. [She coughs.

DOR. And so have I ; and nothing is more dangerous than to sing when one is hoarse ; it is enough to destroy the voice for ever.

LUCY. Really, I believe, I begin to lose my voice.—But, however, if you please——

DOR. No, certainly, I will not allow you to sing ; positively I will not. But let us draw.

LUCY. I have no objection ——— But I am dressed, and I am afraid of spoiling my gown with the dirty red and white crayons.

DOR. That would be a pity, for it suits you to admiration. Come, you are right. — Well, we will let them alone for this day.

LUCY. I am well enough inclined, but what will my aunt say ? perhaps she won't take me to the opera.

DOR. Don't you be uneasy, I'll take care of that. — Some one is coming, I believe. O, 'tis Phillis.

SCENE III.

LUCY, DORINA, PHILLIS.

LUCY. What do you want, Phillis ?

PHIL. I am come to be present at your lesson, Miss, and, as your aunt gives me leave, in the hopes of improving.

DOR. You are come too late, the lesson is over.

PHIL. Ah, I am very sorry for it ; I am so fond of instruction !

DOR. You have, on that head, an excellent model under your eye.

PHIL. Who is it ?

DOR. [pointing to Lucy] Is not Miss there ?

PHIL. Miss Lucy a model of application ! Upon my word I should never have suspected it.

LUCY. [aside] Nor I neither.

DOR. But, Phillis, I suppose you have not the

presumption to believe that you have made a greater progress, and are better instructed, than Miss?

PHIL. I beg pardon, but ——

DOR. How is this? you are quite wanting in respect for her.

PHIL. Ah, my God, that is by no means my intention.

DOR. You should know, likewise, that when one has so much beauty as Miss Lucy, accomplishments may be overlooked.

PHIL. But, Miss, it is you who are wanting in respect for her at this instant.

DOR. How so!

PHIL. You are making game of her.

LUCY. [aside] I really think so too.

DOR. Indeed, Phillis, you are very impertinent.

LUCY. Ah, I pray you, don't be angry with her.

DOR. You take her part when the injury is offered to you. Such generosity!——Yes, you have every virtue.

PHIL. [to Dorina] Miss, I had almost forgot to tell you, I was ordered to let you know, as soon as Miss Lucy's lesson should be over, that you are expected to go and give an account of it to her aunt.

DOR. I shall go. [Softly to Lucy] Be perfectly easy, I will tell her wonders of you, and the progress you have made. [Aloud] Adieu, Miss, I will be back with you presently.

[She goes out.]

LUCY PHILLIS.

LUCY. [aside] She is going to tell lies to my aunt ; she is going to deceive her ; it gives me great vexation ?

PHIL. Miss, you seem melancholy ; are you angry with me ?

LUCY. No, my dear Phillis ——— but I have been vexed, and for a considerable time.

PHIL. Well, what is the matter ? ——— how you distress me !

LUCY. You love me, then, Phillis ?

PHIL. Yes, I do ——— but I don't love Miss Dorina.

LUCY. Why so ?

PHIL. It is because she does not speak truth, and that is so wicked.

LUCY. Well, I want to tell you a secret ; but you must promise me not to speak of it to any one, not even to my aunt.

PHIL. And does not she herself say, that we must not betray a secret ?

LUCY. I may depend upon you, then ?

PHIL. Entirely.

LUCY. Well, Phillis, I love Dorina ; but I own to you, I have for some time observed that she flatters me too much.

PHIL. As to that, I'll lay a wager I discovered it before you did.

LUCY. Her praises are too great to be sincere.

PHIL. And but just now ———

LUCY. I observed it. And likewise she de-

ceives my aunt about my lessons. I commonly consume half my time in doing nothing, and she conceals it.

PHIL. I see that every day.

LUCY. And yet that is nothing in comparison of what has happened this day.

PHIL. What can it be?

LUCY. When she tells my aunt, that I have given application, that I have learnt my lessons well, it is not quite the truth; but at least, I have always done something.——

PHIL. Yes, either well or ill.

LUCY. Well then, think only that for this day,—— Truly, I dare not go on.

PHIL. Say on, Miss, I pray you.

LUCY. This day, Phillis, I have not done any thing.

PHIL. What! did you neither sing, draw, nor play on the harpsichord?

LUCY. Not even made the attempt; yet, at this moment is she telling my aunt that I have done wonders.

PHIL. How wicked that is!

LUCY. It is really a dreadful falsehood.

PHIL. Ah, Miss, confess the whole to your aunt.

LUCY. I cannot; she will dismiss Dorina.

PHIL. A fine loss indeed! a liar.

LUCY. With all her faults she loves me, and that idea attaches me to her.

PHIL. If she loved you, would she flatter you? Would she let all your whims pass unnoticed? Would she not endeavour to correct you?

LUCY. That is true.——But, however, I can't but think she has a regard for me, she repeats it so frequently.

PHIL. And don't you know that lies cost her nothing?

LUCY. That would be so enormous! —

PHIL. Not more than the deceiving your aunt, who has placed such confidence in her.

LUCY. In short, I must have a very clear proof before I can be persuaded she does not love me; and as I have none, I am resolved not to make her be dismissed. Phillis, be sure to keep my secret.

PHIL. You may depend upon it. — But I hear your aunt's voice. 'Tis she, and Miss Dorina following her.

SCENE V.

PHILLIS, LUCY, MELINDA, DORINA.

MEL. [to Lucy] Come, and embrace me, my dear Lucy; Dorina is delighted with you, and what she has been telling me of you, gives me great pleasure.

LUCY. [aside]. That pierces me to the soul.

MEL. If you always behave in this manner, you will make me happy.

LUCY. [embarrassed]. Aunt —

MEL. Promise me, my dear, that you will do as well every day. — You do not answer, you look down — you are not willing to promise what would make me very happy?

DOR. O, I am sure Miss will acquit herself of it with pleasure.

LUCY. [sharply to Dorina] No, Miss, no. —

DOR. [to Lucy] But you do not reflect.

MEL. [to Lucy] Well, Lucy, I am not displeased at what you said just now ; at least, it had sincerity to recommend it. I wish you to be accomplished, but above all things, I wish you to love truth ; it is the chief of all the virtue.

LUCY. [aside] How I suffer from this ; what a reproach for me !

MEL. Let us talk no more of study to-day ; Dorinda is pleased with you, and you must be rewarded : let us only think of amusing ourselves.

LUCY. Truly, my dear aunt, I do not deserve to be rewarded.

MEL. That opinion shews you are the more deserving.

DOR. [softly to Lucy] Lay aside that confused look.

LUCY. [to Dorinda, peevishly] Let me alone.

MEL. [to Lucy] My dear, I observe you are dejected and changed ; are you sick ?

LUCY. No, madam.

MEL. She has given too much application to her lesson. [To Dorinda.] You must not give her such long lessons any more ; I don't choose that she should be fatigued.

LUCY. [aside] Every word she says penetrates me to the quick.

MEL. It is only four o'clock ; I will go and take a walk in the garden before I finish my dressing. Lucy, will you go with me ?

LUCY. Most willingly, dear aunt.

MEL. The air will do you good, for, I dare say you have a head-ach. Come, child. [She leans upon Lucy ; they go out, Phillis following.]

SCENE VI.

DOR. [alone] Lucy gave me a very serious look ; what could it mean ? ——— She is a whimsical little creature. ——— But now I am alone, I will read over the letter I began this morning. In truth, I have not a moment to myself. [She searches her pocket.] Ah, that is another. I believe, God forgive me, I have lost it.—That would be dreadful. [She still searches.] I cannot find it. Perhaps I have left it upon my table. O, heaven, how vexing ! I must go and find it. [She makes some steps to go.]

SCENE VII.

DORINA, PHILLIS.

PHIL. My God, Miss, where are you running so fast ?

DOR. Have you not found a paper by accident ?

PHIL. What is it like ?

DOR. A sheet folded.

PHIL. Is there any writing ?

DOR. Yes, there is.

PHIL. Two pages ?

DOR. Ay, that is it. Come, give it me.

PHIL. I have found nothing ; it was only to laugh.

DOR. Plague take the little blockhead, that has kept me so long. I must go and find it.

[She goes out.]

PHIL. [alone] Yes, yes, make haste. Go

your ways, but you'll find nothing.——Little blockhead, said she?——not such a blockhead neither.——Ah, here comes Miss Lucy in the nick of time.

S C E N E VIII.

P H I L L I S, L U C Y.

PHIL. Come, come, Miss, I have something droll to tell you.

LUCY. What about?

PHIL. You will always continue to believe Miss Dorina's friendship for you?

LUCY. I have no new reason to doubt her.

PHIL. Do you know her writing?

LUCY. I think so.

PHIL. [Taking a letter out of her pocket.] Well, here is a letter she has begun. Will you hear how she treats you in it?

LUCY. You have read it then?

PHIL. Yes, at first, without knowing what it was, and afterwards to be perfectly informed with regard to her.

LUCY. Phillis, what you have done is very bad; you ought not to——

PHIL. I own it; but it was my attachment to you made me commit this fault. I observed that you were mentioned in this letter, and I wanted to know upon what I might depend. Here it is.

LUCY. If you give it me, I will burn it without opening it.

PHIL. If that is the case I will keep it. But,

Miss, the evil is already done ; do you take the advantage of it. —

LUCY. But how did the paper fall into your hands ?

PHIL. I found it upon the stairs.

LUCY. And in it Dorina speaks ill of me ?

PHIL. Perhaps they are only truths. I shall read, and you will judge for yourself. [She reads aloud.] “ Pity me, my dear friend, not
“ only because of my being separated from you,
“ but likewise on account of the disagreeable
“ life I lead here. That little girl whom I
“ mentioned to you formerly, distracts me every
“ day more and more.” —

LUCY. [interrupting her.] My name is not mentioned, perhaps she means you.

PHIL. Hear me to the end. [She reads.]
“ In addition to all my trouble, I am obliged
“ to approve of her, and still more to flatter
“ her, because she is so vain it is the only means
“ of pleasing her.” —

LUCY. Ah, my God ! —

PHIL. [continuing to read] “ She imagines
“ herself to be a little prodigy of wit, while
“ in fact, she has not common sense ; for she
“ has every fault that can make her a block-
“ head ; she is proud and makes game of peo-
“ ple ; passes her life in idleness, bantering,
“ and slander, or before the looking-glass, in
“ contemplating the most indifferent and most
“ common figure you ever saw. In short, Lu-
“ cy” — [She interrupts herself.] “ The name
“ is mentioned this time ! —

LUCY. Ah, what malice ! —

PHIL. [continuing] “ In short, Lucy will “ one day be the most impertinent and ridiculous little creature”——That is all, Miss, the letter is not finished.——She stopped there in a fair way.

LUCY. Give it me, I'll read it myself.

[She takes the letter, and reads it to herself.

PHIL. See, there it is; I have added nothing.

LUCY. [returning the letter] Is it possible to have a mind so base, as to carry falsehood such lengths.—I may have all the faults she finds in me, but why conceal them from me? Why did she not warn me of them? I might have corrected myself.

PHIL. You must acquaint your aunt with every thing:

LUCY. Won't that look like revenge? And revenge is so disgraceful!

PHIL. It will not be revenging yourself, but ceasing to deceive your aunt.

LUCY. I shall not mention the letter; I shall only make a confession of the falsehood which was told her a little while ago.

PHIL. Your aunt is so good, that the confession will not be sufficient to make her dismiss Dorina.

LUCY. No matter, I am determined to speak of nothing but that.

PHIL. I will go and find your aunt.

LUCY. Don't say any thing to her, I will own my fault to her myself.

PHIL. [aside] Yes, yes, she won't mention the letter; but I will shew it. The wicked must be punished.

[She goes out.

LUCY. [alone] Such ingratitude ! Such falsehood ! —— I much lament her being so wicked ; it will occasion much repentance. — People are not born so ; she certainly has had a bad education. — Alas ! perhaps she was flattered when she was a child ! — Odious flattery ! I shall ever detest you ! [She sinks down upon a chair.

S C E N E IX.

DORINA, LUCY.

DOR. [at the bottom of the stage, not seeing Lucy.] I have not found it. There is enough in it to ruin me. ——

LUCY. [aside] 'Tis she ; my heart beats. [Aloud.] What are you looking for ?

DOR. Nothing ; but what do you do here alone ?

LUCY. I was thinking.

DOR. Of what were you thinking ?

LUCY. On a thousand things —— for example, I was thinking of my faults.

DOR. So you are occupied in thinking of chimeras ; I shall chide you, if you employ your time so badly.

LUCY. No ; I have at last learnt to know, and I wish to correct myself ; but you must second me, and tell me the truth. —— Inform me when I do wrong —— tell me all my faults ; in a word, become sincere. —— On that condition, I may still —— yes, Dorina, I may still continue my regard for you.

DOR. What is the meaning of this language, and this gloomy reserved manner ?

LUCY. I cannot dissemble ——— That dreadful vice, at least is not yet in my heart. I will summon friendship to my assistance ; she will not flatter me, but tell me the truth. I am young, and perhaps shall get the better of those faults, with which I have been too justly reproached.

DOR. What do I hear ! Ah ! I am ruined.

LUCY. I am not offended with you for describing me as you see me, and such perhaps as I really am ; but, at least, in giving the detail of my faults, you should not complain, since they are your own work.

DOR. It is enough, Miss ; spare me the rest, and receive my adieu.

LUCY. Your adieu ! ——— Why leave me ?
——— I repeat it to you, you may atone for what you have done. ——— Do not deceive me any more, and continue.

DOR. No, Miss, I must bid you an eternal adieu.

LUCY. Eternal ! ——— Stop ——— Dorina, what will become of you ?

DOR. I do not know. ———

LUCY. Well, then, remain with me, I conjure you ; my aunt shall not know what is past, I promise you.

DOR. But, Miss, can you forget it ?

LUCY. I cannot forget it, but you need not doubt my forgiveness.

DOR. That is not enough ; my presence must be disagreeable to you ; you shall be freed from it. ——— Farewell, Miss. [She goes out.

LUCY. [in tears] Hear me ——— hear me.

—She is gone!—where can she go?—I feel my tears flow in spite of me.—She deceived me, she hated me; I no longer esteem her, I must no longer love her!—But I did love her—'Tis that recollection which affects me. She can no longer be dear to me;—however, I must interest myself in her fate.——Somebody comes.
——Ah! it is my aunt.

SCENE X.

MELINDA, PHILLIS, LUCY.

MEL. My dear Lucy, I come to thank you for your purpose of owning your faults to me.

LUCY. My dear aunt, has Phillis told you?—

MEL. She has told me all, and shewn me the letter, notwithstanding you forbid her; which, however, I approve of. Dorina has received the just reward of her wickedness; she is unmasked, and dismissed.

LUCY. You met her, then?

MEL. This instant; and I gave her her discharge.

LUCY. But where will she find an asylum?

MEL. I do not know.

LUCY. Ah! dear aunt, she has no fortune; I conjure you——

MEL. You desire it, that is enough; I promise you, I will make a necessary provision for

her. At last, thank heaven, her imprudence has made amends for the injury she did you by her treachery. May this sad proof teach you, my child, to distrust flatterers, and to cherish truth, which alone can shew us our faults, and check that vanity which seduces and leads us astray.

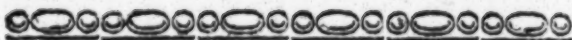
T H E E N D.

E

T H E
EFFECTS OF CURIOSITY,

A
C O M E D Y,

In Two ACTS.



THE PERSONS.

LADY WALCOURT.

SOPHIA,

HELEN,

}

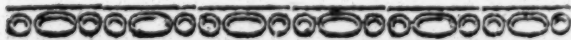
her Daughters.

CONSTANCE, Niece of Lady Walcourt.

LORD WALCOURT, Son of Lady Walcourt,
a silent person. He should be dressed in re-
gimentals, and with his hair dishevelled.

ROSE, the Gardener's Daughter.

Scene, Lady Walcourt's house in the country.





THE
EFFECTS OF CURIOSITY.
A COMEDY.

A C T I.

SCENE FIRST.

The stage represents a garden.

SOPHIA, HELEN,
HELEN.

SISTER, my dear Sophia, I conjure you—

SOP. Once more I tell you, all these precautions are fruitless ; I know no secrets.

HEL. What, Sophia ! you whose disposition is truth itself, can you maintain a falsehood with such assurance ?

SOP. A falsehood !—an obliging expression—

HEL. It is a just one, however.

SOP. No ; for you always confound indiscretion with frankness, and make a virtue of what is truly a fault : to deceive from a view of interest, from vanity, or in jest, is to tell a

lie ; but they who steadily maintain that they are ignorant of the secrets with which they have been entrusted, discharge the duty imposed by honour, and upon which the safety of society depends.

HEL. So at last you own you are the depositary of a secret ? O, I beg to congratulate you.

SOP. What I say does not relate to me, I speak in general.

HEL. Very well, it is only a remonstrance in form of a definition.

SOP. Helen, let us change the subject ; you are going to vex yourself, I see plainly.

HEL. Am I wrong ? I am your sister, I love you, I tell you all I know, and you have no confidence in me.

SOP. My dear Helen, you have an excellent heart, and a thousand good qualities, but——

HEL. But I am curious ; is not that it ? Well, I own I am : it is because I have not your tranquility, your indifference ; it is because I set an infinite value upon the least thing that can be interesting to those I love ; that is the reason of my wishing to know, and to discover whatever regards them. If I had less sensibility I should be perfect in your eyes, for in that case, I assure you, I should have no curiosity.

SOP. But, sister, I always observe that your curiosity exercises itself indifferently, and without choice, on every object that presents itself.

HEL. Yes, formerly ; I own, when I was a child I might deserve that reproach.

SOP. It is no more than fifteen days ago, that Rose, the gardener's daughter was to have been married; she entrusted her secret to me; it became necessary that Mama should prevail with the young man's relations who had another match in view for him, and till that time the affair was kept secret; but by your industry you discovered it, the secret was divulged, and the marriage broke off.

HEL. It was true. I was wrong on that occasion; but I did not foresee what has since happened.

SOP. I am certain you never intentionally do a bad action; but, sister, excessive curiosity always draws after it the most dangerous indiscretions. Mama has told you of this so often!

HEL. That you might spare yourself the trouble of repeating it. But to return to what we were just now speaking of, I protest to you I have no desire to know your secret, but because I have found out that it is you who are personally concerned. For as to mere curiosity, I am corrected—but—absolutely.

SOP. You assure me of it;—I must believe you. Well sister, rest satisfied: If it be true that I know a secret, I can assure you it does not regard me.

HEL. If it is true! —but speak plain; do you, or do you not know one?

SOP. What signifies it to you, since the assurance I have given you, ought to put an end to the apprehensions which you had merely on account of your friendship for me?

HEL. So that in short I may depend upon it, the secret does not concern you.

SOP. Still the secret — I by no means allow that I know one, but, on the contrary, I deny it.

HEL. Yet every thing gives you the lie. I have eyes ! Have ! not seen since last night all your whisperings with my cousin ; and when I appeared, the signs and gestures, and all the confusion which I occasioned — At this very moment you expect Constance, I am sure of it ; I constrain you by remaining here ; you have been rude, you have scolded, you have lectured me, that you might induce me to leave you, but I will remain where I am, I promise you ; (in mockery) I love you too well, my dear little sister, to go from you, I am resolved not to part from you one instant this whole day.

SOP. (Aside.) What patience one must have ! (Aloud.) Do you imagine, Helen, that such conduct can induce any one to place much confidence in you ?

HEL. You go too far ; yes, you distract me, you are ungrateful.

SOP. Ah Helen, how unjust you are !

HEL. In short, you prefer Constance to me ; you make her your confidante, and I am only a third person, troublesome and teasing to both of you : I, who am older than she is, and who am your sister ; is not that cruel ?

SOP. Ah ! if you were less curious, and less indiscreet, I should never desire to conceal any thing from you : but, sister, that confidence which you require, you have betrayed so often —

HEL. I repeat it to you, I am changed ; make a trial, trust me with your secret.

SOP. So, sister, you pretend to be no longer curious.

HEL. I am but in jest — I swear to you, if you were desirous just now to tell me your secret, I would not hearken to it : besides, if I was anxious to know it, I easily could in spite of you ; I can guess right sometimes ; you may remember.

SOP. Yes, and I have seen your penetration mislead you oft'ner than once.

HEL. I foresee that it will serve me well upon the present occasion.—I'll lay a wager that it is about marriage.—We are three people here to marry, you, my cousin, and myself ; and the whole difficulty is to guess which of the three is the object of the present attention.

SOP. What ! do you think if it was you, it would be concealed from you, and you the only one of the three from whom it would be kept a secret ?

HEL. O my God, I am sure Mama would trust you with it, before she mentioned it to me, and I should not be informed of it till the whole affair was settled.

SOP. Ah ! Helen, what reflections must the certainty of this occasion you to make ! What severe justice do you inflict upon yourself ? Is it possible that, being persuaded you inspire such a hurtful humiliating distrust, you do not get the better of your faults ?

HEL. So, so, you allow then that I have almost guessed.——

SOP. Guesſed what? —

HEL. This marriage.

SOP. How, ſiſter, do you imagine you are going to be married?

HEL. You made me think ſo.

SOP. Who, I? —

HEL. It is true, you are older than I—but one year only — Aha! a thought comes in my head—perhaps we are both going to be married at the ſame time. —

SOP. Without doubt, and Conſtance too; three marriages in one day, that is the ſecret; now you have diſcovered it.

HEL. Now you banter; but for one marriage — there is one in the wind that is certain. — This Baron Sanford, who arrived yeſterday, and who was never ſeen here before — you won't tell me now, there is no ſecret? — His long converſations with Mama, his abſence of mind, his being abſorbed in thought, every thing proves it—yet he is very melancholy and very old—I don't ſuppoſe it is he that thinks of marrying; but perhaps he has a ſon — or ſome nephews — I ſhall unravel it all. My God, how unlucky it is my brother is not here; he loves me, he would have no whiſperings. Well, he muſt ſoon return from his regiment — Sophia, what is the matter with you? You are abſent, you don't hearken to me.

SOP. I have nothing to reply to all the follies you have been uttering this hour.

HEL. Follies! — There is nobody reaſonable but yourſelf, at leaſt you think ſo. — Yes, you think you are a little model of perfection —

when you have preached sufficiently, and with great energy, you preserve a contemptuous silence, and not one word more can be obtained from you—O, you are excellent company!

SOP. Helen, you want to put me in a passion; but you shall not succeed, except in making me vexed at those faults which my friendship cannot see in you without being excessively grieved.

HEL. I don't know how it is, but you always have the secret of being in the right.

SOP. You that love secrets so much, ought certainly to learn that one; I don't flatter myself that I have it, but at least I know how to prefer it to all other secrets.

HEL. Ah! Sophia, if you loved me more, I would esteem you from the bottom of my heart—Somebody comes—ha! it is Constance.

SCENE II.

SOPHIA, HELEN, CONSTANCE.

CON. [Comes in haste and says:] Sophia!— [Then, seeing Helen, she stops. They continue a short time silent, during which Helen observes them.]

SOP. [To Constance.] Constance, did not you come to look for us?

HEL. Yes, and she is happy at finding us together—it is painted on her countenance.

CON. Why do you think otherwise, Helen? I love you both equally, you know I do.

SOP. Surely! When mutual confidence is esta-

blished, as it is between us three, if one is absent, the other two wish for her, or go in search of her: that is what my sister and I were about to do when you came; but now that we are got together let us chat; come let us sit down.

[She draws a seat.]

SOP. [low to Constance.] We must dissemble.

CON. [low to Sophia.] We shall never find a moment to read this letter—[She stops, because Helen turns her head round to look at them.]

HEL. O, I see what you would be at.

SOP. What?

HEL. To speak softly—truly this is not to be endured—I dare say that from two people so prudent, so discreet, and so perfect, a little more politeness might be expected; but I will be no longer troublesome, I shall leave you at full liberty. Adieu, Sophia; I shall no longer constrain you; from henceforth I shall avoid you, since I have no other means of pleasing you.

SOP. My dear Helen, how cruel you are! I intreat you to stay. ———

HEL. No, sister, no—to tell you the truth, I am acting against my inclination—if I was to remain, you would make me lose all the patience and I would rather be vexed than go away, but we should learn to master our passions. Adieu. [She goes out hastily.]

SCENE III.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE.

[They remain silent a short time till they have lost sight of Helen.]

CON. So, she is gone at last. —

SOP. Yes, but I am afraid she will be soon back again.

CON. She is likewise very capable of hiding herself, that she may overhear. —

SOP. Go softly and see—My God, how vexing, to be obliged to take precautions against a person one loves! —

CON. [returning.] Now you may be easy. I met Rose at the entrance into the grove, and bid her acquaint us if she sees Helen.

SOP. But that is telling Rose we have a secret. —

CON. By no means.—Rose is so simple! I told her, laughing, that it was a joke, and she the rather believes it, as we have already oftner than once made her watch for trifles—in short, we are secure at least that Helen will not come and surprise us.—Dear Sophia, let us lose no more time.

SOP. I told you last night I had received a letter from my brother; that I had read it, and was permitted to communicate the contents to you. —

CON. And it was the steward who delivered the letter to you?

SOP. Yes ; here it is, I will read it to you ; ah my dear Constance !

CON. Sophia you are in tears—O heavens ! what has happened ? ———

SOP. If you knew all that I have suffered since yesterday, and with what difficulty I have seemed to be as calm and as gay as usual !—Hear this letter and you will judge—but see first, if Rose is still watching.

CON. I will.

SOP. O brother, brother !—what will be the end of this cruel adventure ?

CON. [returning.] Rose is still there, and Helen not to be seen, let us take advantage of the present favourable moment ; read then, my dear Sophia, either calm, or complete this dreadful disquiet.

SOP. Alas ! what am I going to communicate to you ! [She unfolds the letter.] The date is, Thursday morning, ———

CON. That is yesterday !—but Lord Walcourt's regiment is forty-five leagues from hence ; how could you receive it the same day ?

SOP. Ah Constance, my brother is not with his regiment, he is here. ———

CON. Here !

SOP. Oh my God ! don't raise your voice, if we should be heard—Yes, he is concealed in this house, but hear the letter, it will inform you of every thing.—[She reads it aloud but in a low voice, and looking from time to time with apprehension lest some one should come. She runs her eye over it.] Hum, hum—" But let me
" come to the particulars of my unfortunate

“adventure.—You know that the regiment of
“the Marquis of Wallace, is thirty leagues
“distant from our’s, and you are no stranger
“to the friendship which unites us: a letter
“from one of our common friends, informed
“me that he had lost a considerable sum at
“play, and was exceedingly distressed; being
“desirous to fly without delay to his assistance,
“I ordered my servant to report that I was
“sick, on purpose to be excused from duty,
“and I set out immediately, in hopes of re-
“turning in two days at farthest.” You will
recollect my brother in this action.

CON. Ah! that stroke is a true picture of his soul.

SOP. That a noble action should have such
fatal consequences! — but let us have done.
[She reads.] “As I set off without leave, I had
“the precaution to change my name for that of
“Sir John Myrtle, under which name I ar-
“rived at Valenciennes. On entering the town,
“I could not think, my dear Sophia, without
“the most tender emotions, that I was but fif-
“teen leagues distant from my mother and sis-
“ters” — I cannot stop my tears.

CON. Give it to me; I’ll read it. [She takes
the letter.]

SOP. Hush, I hear a noise.

CON. ’Tis Rose.

SOP. Ah! give me my letter. [She takes the
letter and puts it in her pocket.]

[Rose enters hastily and mysteriously, and says
in passing near Sophia,

Miss Helen is at my heels. [She crosses the
stage, and goes out at the opposite side.]

SOP. Was there ever any thing so unlucky?—

CON. Let us go to our chamber.

SOP. Helen will follow us there likewise—
but here she comes ; let us change our subject.

SCENE IV.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE, ROSE, HELEN.

[The last makes some steps, and then stops.]

CON. For my part I love the English gardens better.

SOP. And I think their imitations of nature are but meanly executed, and—

HEL. [coming forward.] Pardon me, I am afraid I interrupt a very lively and interesting dispute.

CON. O not at all, we were speaking of gardens.

HEL. Yes, and for fear of being interrupted in such an important conversation, you placed a sentry at the entrance of the grove.

SOP. What is it you mean?

HEL. Rose was not here just now. I did not see her take to her heels, to come and acquaint you of my approach. Sophia, Constance, you are both very prudent ; but you have no address, you really have none, I must tell you so. I would have you employ some more skill in your little intrigues, without which they will always be discovered.

CON. Well, what have you discovered?

HEL. In the first place, that you have a secret ; it remains to be known what that secret is, which to discover I only ask the remainder of this day, and in the evening I will give you an account of it : O I promise you, you sha'n't be kept longing for it. Now let me begin. In the first place, by looking at you attentively, I owe to your gestures the discovery of what nature your secret is ; you have talked of it, for you cannot think I am to be misled by your English garden. Let me see a little what impression it has left on your countenances.—

SOP. Helen, you see nothing in mine, but the shame I feel for you, on account of that disgraceful curiosity which hurries you, to such excess.

HEL. With what an air of indignation do you speak to me ! O heavens ! is it not enough to refuse me your confidence ? Sophia, you despise me.—If I have not your good qualities, I may acquire them ; I am but young, I may correct myself : Sister, have you lost all hopes of me ? Ah answer me ; encourage me.—

SOP. With so good a heart, is it possible you can be incorrigible ?

HEL. Ah, Sister !— [They embrace : and after a short silence.]

SOP. My dear Helen, I expect every thing from your understanding and reflection.

HEL. And I from your example and advice.

CON. Somebody comes—I believe it is my aunt.

HEL. Yes, 'tis she.

SCENE V.

SOPHA, CONSTANCE, HELEN, LADY
WALCOURT.

L. WAL. [aside at the bottom of the Stage.]

Here she is, the rest must be sent away.
[aloud.] Helen, go and receive some company
in the saloon that are just arrived, and I will
be with you presently. Constance, go with
your cousin—and Sophia, do you remain.

HEL. And my sister—is not she to come
with us?

L. WAL. That is not necessary—go, Helen—

HEL. But Mama, Sophia is eldest, and she
will do the honours much better than I.

L. WAL. I think you sufficiently capable to
take her place upon the present occasion.

HEL. You will remain then alone with her?

L. WAL. I wish to have fewer questions,
and more obedience, Helen,

HEL. Fewer questions!—I have asked but
one.——

L. WAL. I forbid you to add a second, or
to remain one moment longer.

HEL. [Aside, in going out.] This is very
hard! I am sadly vexed. [She goes out, Con-
stance following.]

SCENE VI.

Lady WALCOURT, SOPHIA.

L. WAL. [Seeing Helen go out.] What a

strange temper!—what vexation she gives me!—Now we are alone, my child, I want to talk with you, Sophia, I have occasion to open my heart to you.

SOP. Ah, Mama, I dare not ask you the cause of your melancholy.——

L. WAL. I am oppressed with vexation, which is more severe, as I must dissemble in the presence of every one. My dear, your prudence and discretion, so superior to your age, justifies my confidence in you; it is boundless, and I am going to prove it, by revealing the most important secret that I ever can discover to you.

SOP. You may by new instances of kindness add to my happiness, but neither my affection nor gratitude can be increased; my dear Mama, I cannot love you better, nor feel more sensibly all that I owe to you.

L. WAL. Ah! my dear Sophia, you make me a happy mother!—but alas! I have but one friend, tho' I have two daughters.

SOP. Helen will in time render herself deserving of a title so honourable and so dear to—

L. WAL. Ah! would to heaven!—But let us return to the secret I want to communicate to you; my dear Sophia, it will distress you.

SOP. Am I not already prepared for it, since I see you are afflicted?

L. WAL. The secret regards your brother.

SOP. [Aside.] I know it but too well.
[Aloud.] Well, Mama.

L. WAL. I must begin by telling you that

he is well and in safety ; at present his history, in two words, is, he left his regiment about twelve days ago, and without leave ; friendship called him to Valenciennes, where he went under an assumed name ; it was his misfortune to put up at the same inn with the son of Baron Sanford ; that very evening, they entered into so warm a dispute that they resolved to fight next morning.

SOP. Good God !

L. WAL. In fact they set out at the break of day, both on horseback, to go and fight on the frontiers ; what shall I tell you, my dear Sophia, your brother, after having received a deep and dangerous wound, gave a terrible blow to his adversary, whom he saw stagger, and bathed in blood fall at his feet ; he believed he was killed, and himself scarcely able to stand, drew towards his horse, and very soon collecting the little strength that remained to him, withdrew from the fatal place. This dreadful scene happened on the frontiers, and of course but four leagues from hence. —

SOP. Ah ! so near to us !

L. WAL. My son having but a step to make to be out of France, intended to leave the kingdom, but in half an hour being quite exhausted from loss of blood, was obliged to stop and sit down at the foot of a tree, where he very soon lost the use of his senses. At that instant, Providence conducted the faithful Theobald, my steward, whose attachment you well know, to the very spot.

SOP. Ah ! could heaven abandon the son of

the most affectionate and best of mothers! — All its favours, Mama, we owe to your goodness.

L. WAL. The greatest of all for me, it has placed in your heart; it is in that pure and feeling mind I find the greatest happiness I can enjoy, and the only consolation of which I am susceptible. — But let us resume that melancholy conversation which perhaps we may have no opportunity of renewing before the evening.

SOP. Theobald then brought my brother here?

L. WAL. Happily he was alone in a covered chaise, into which he carried my son, who continued insensible; and taking by-roads, brought him at first to his mother's at the end of the village; then, when all this family were gone to bed, he came to acquaint me with the tragical event. I ran myself to find my unhappy son; Theobald, and the family-surgeon, transported him to my apartment, where I have watched him for seven nights, during which he was in great danger!

SOP. And I have had no share in such dear and melancholy attendance! — But, Mama, is my brother perfectly recovered?

L. WAL. He is at least in a condition to set out without danger.

SOP. What! is he going to leave you?

L. WAL. Alas! he must. Judge, my dear child, in what distress I am involved: this Baron Sanford, who is just arrived, is the father of the unfortunate young man whom your brother has undoubtedly killed.

SOP. He knows nothing of this fatal event?—

L. WAL. Thank heaven, he knows but one part of the truth. He was told that his son and Sir John Myrtle had set out together, and in haste; the people of the inn declared that they had a very warm dispute; that they had received no intelligence of them, and it was but too probable they went off in such hurry for no other purpose but to fight. They added, that in the dispute my son had been the aggressor. On being acquainted with the fatal adventure, Baron Sanford, who is naturally violent, and of keen feelings, was equally animated with grief and resentment: he wrote to the officers commanding the frontier towns, that he might learn if Sir John Myrtle had passed into the neighbouring state, or to prevent his flight if there was still time.

SOP. So that not knowing my brother's true name, he is in pursuit of a phantom.

L. WAL. But he may discover that name which is of such importance for us to conceal; his fortune, his rank, and character, make him a most formidable and dangerous enemy—

SOP. But what is his purpose in coming here?

L. WAL. He is come into this province in expectation of obtaining some information about the fate of his son. He supposes that he sought on the frontiers, my estate is situated there, we were acquainted formerly, and all these circumstances have determined him to come here; think what I must feel at seeing him enter this house!—He gave me the whole detail of this

terrible history; he talks to me of nothing but his grief, and his schemes of vengeance; I join him in his grief, and his sorrow, and weep with him; but how bitter must those tears be which are shed in the bosom of a cruel enemy, the persecutor of my son! —

SOP. My God! you make me shudder!

L. WAL. Sometimes I venture to combat his resentment, and undoubtedly at that time my zeal hurries me too far, for he stares at me with surprize, and his look of astonishment dismays me: I feel as if I was betraying myself, and had pronounced the name of my son — In short, for these four and twenty hours, I have experienced whatever constraint, terror, and pity can inflict that is cruel and grievous. But, alas! the unhappy man who is the the occasion of this distress, is more to be pitied than I. —

SOP. Unhappy man! he thinks there is comfort in revenge! —

L. WAL. Alas! he undoubtedly imposes upon himself; — if it be true that there are hearts which can err so egregiously as to desire vengeance, are there any so inhuman as to satiate such a desire without horror? — This shocking gratification of mean and savage dispositions, degrades him who yields to it, and condemns him to eternal remorse.

SOP. Mama, is my brother to set out soon?

L. WAL. This very night.

SOP. And these orders given to the Governors of the Frontier Towns? —

L. WAL. These orders relate only to Sir John Myrtle ; my son is known, and cannot be confounded with a young man of a different name, and who is represented as an adventurer. These are the reflexions which encourage me, but still I tremble, and am oppressed and persecuted with dreadful apprehensions.—If Baron Sanford was to hear positively of the death of his son ; if he was to discover the asylum and real name of his enemy ; gracious heaven ! to what an excess of mad despair would it not transport him !——

SOP. Ah ! Mama, you terrify me.——

L. WAL. I have taken all the precautions which the prudence of a mother could suggest ; I have given orders to let no stranger have admittance. Theobald told me that a man came this morning to ask if Baron Sanford was here ; Theobald, without hesitation, replied that he was not ; this man having received fresh instructions returned in two hours, and insisted on speaking with the Baron, and seeing him alone, and refused to give his name ; Theobald dismissed him, by informing him that the Baron could not receive him till to-morrow evening ; and my son by that time will be out of France.

SOP. This man who conceals what he is, disturbs me ; and I recollect, that this morning when I was walking with Helen and my Governess in the little wood, I saw a man wandering up and down who observed us, and seemed desirous to avoid being seen : his hat was pulled over his face so that I would not see his looks.

L. WAL. How! did he follow you?

SOP. Yes, but always at a distance. We sat down, and having lost sight of him, we chatted freely, when in about half an hour, a noise which I heard behind among the leaves, made me look round, and I saw the same man with his back to us, running off with all his speed.

L. WAL. Certainly he heard you.

SOP. We thought so, and immediately returned home.

L. WAL. Undoubtedly it must be the same man Theobald speaks of—But what can this mysterious conduct mean?—Come, let us go to the Baron, and not leave him again—Ah! I wish night was come! What a day has this been!—but I hear somebody coming.

SOP. 'Tis Rose.

L. WAL. What can she want?—

SCENE VII.

LADY WALCOURT, SOPHIA, ROSE.

ROSE. Madam!

L. WAL. Well, Rose!

ROSE. Mr. Theobald enquires for your Ladyship.

L. WAL. Where is he?

ROSE. In the great Court.

L. WAL. Let us go immediately; come Sophia. [aside in going out.] Alas! every thing vexes and disturbs me.

ROSE [makes several signs to Sophia to induce

her to stay ; Sophia does not seem to observe them, and goes out with Lady Walcourt.]

SCENE VIII.

ROSE [alone.] All my signs are useless, she takes no sort of notice of them — zooks, half so many would have been enough to have kept Miss Helen. — O ! 'tis she that is curious ; she has made me so too ; — I believe it is catching — What the plague shall I do with this letter ? — [She pulls a letter out of her pocket and reads.] To Miss Walcourt — Certainly it is for the eldest — She would not stay ; I would have told her all — [She puts up the letter again.] I am very desirous to know what is in this letter — the young man ; and the money too, they altogether stagger me — [She pulls a purse out of her pocket.] Twelve guineas ! — that makes in shillings and pence — I don't know how much. — Somebody comes. — My God, let me put up the purse and the letter.

SCENE IX.

HELEN, ROSE.

HEL. Rose — what are you doing there ?

ROSE. Nothing, Miss.

HEL. How you blush ! —

ROSE. Marry, 'tis very warm.

HEL. You was hiding something in your pocket ; I saw it. — Why all this mystery, my dear Rose ; is it because you no longer have any friendship for me ?

ROSE. You want to pump me, I see that.

HEL. Ah, I pray you tell me true, and I give you my word of honour not to be guilty of any indiscretion.

ROSE. But it is stronger than you—don't you remember how you spoiled my marriage?

HEL. Well, I will make you amends; I promise you I will make your fortune.

ROSE. Ah! my fortune is in a fair way; I am richer than I wish to be, for it causes care.—

HEL. What do you mean? I pray explain yourself.—

ROSE. Ay, now you coax me, I must tell you every thing.

HEL. [embracing her.] Ah Rose! how I love you.

ROSE. I am going to tell you a droll story.—

HEL. Make haste then.

ROSE. Marry it is like one of the adventures in that green book which my lady forbid you to read, and which you stole.—

HEL. But what is it, Rose?—

ROSE. In short, it is a story like a romance.

HEL. [aside.] How she teazes me [aloud.] but Rose, begin.

ROSE. Well then. I was taking a walk just now in the avenue, when all of a sudden, a man came towards me muffled up in a great coat and a slouched hat, but yet he seemed to be a young man. He says to me, do you belong to the house? Yes Sir, says I. Well then, says he, give this letter to Miss Walcourt, and take that for yourself, I will give you many more if you are discreet.

HEL. Ah ! 'tis the man we saw in the morning : well Rose, what did you answer ?

ROSE. By Gemini I said nothing, I had not time to say a word : he left me a letter and a purse, and crack ! he was gone in an instant. Then I, quite amazed, counted the money, and then put it in my pocket with the letter. That is all.

HEL. And you have the letter still !

ROSE. Yes, sure.

HEL. Ah, let me see it.

ROSE. I would with all my heart, but you can't read it, it is sealed. Hold, here it is.

HEL. [Reads the address.] [To Miss Walcourt.]—Is it directed for my sister or me ?

ROSE. O, I engage it is for Miss Sophia.

HEL. Why so ?

ROSE. You very well know Mary-Jane the farmer's wife ?

HEL. Well !

ROSE. She sells wine.

HEL. What then ?

ROSE. Well, about two days ago, a young man came to her house to call for a bottle, but instead of drinking, he passed the whole time in asking questions about Miss Walcourt, the tallest, she that has the sensible look—these were his words. O, Mary-Jane told him fine things, for she loves Miss Sophia, God knows—and then there is but one opinion about your sister ; that is true.

HEL. And that young man—he asked no questions about me ?

ROSE. No, he only spoke of her that has the

sensible look ; you was never once mentioned — You see this is the same that gave me the letter, at least it is very probable.

HEL. [sorrowfully.] Rose, I must carry this letter to Mama — if it had been for me, I must not have opened it---so that I should never have known its contents —

ROSE. Because of your acting so properly my Lady, will perhaps tell you what is in it : that is the way Miss Sophia gets all told her.

HEL. I only wish to know whether this letter is signed----It is a very extraordinary affair ; can it have any relation with the secret which occupies Mama, Sophia, and Constance.

ROSE. You suspect then that there is a secret in the wind ?

HEL. Rose, have not you discovered something ?

ROSE. By my faith, perhaps there is none in the house but you and I who don't know it ; you Miss, because of your curiosity, and I because they observe that you make me prate as much as you please. But however I have picked up some little matter —

HEL. Ah Rose, what is it ?

ROSE. I will tell you with all my heart, upon condition that if you open the letter you will read it to me —

HEL. O fy ! I shall not open it.

ROSE. Well ! you won't keep that resolution — O, I know you.

HEL. You have a very bad opinion of me then, Rose ?

ROSE. My God, Miss, I beg your pardon---but after what I have seen you do —

HEL. I may be weak enough to be led into some indiscretions, but I hope I am incapable of committing a crime of such a serious nature—A girl of my age opening a letter in private, from a young man, and he too unknown—a letter which is probably designed for another person—O heaven! if curiosity could mislead to such a degree, is there a crime more dangerous, or more shocking?

ROSE. Don't make yourself uneasy Miss; we will not read it. Well, I will tell you all I know without it.

HEL. Make haste then, for it is almost dinner-time.

ROSE. Yesterday evening when your Mama was in the parterre with the Baron, I was passing, and heard him say; Sir John Myrtle, and then they spoke low; quite low, but I remember that name, because I heard it once before from Mr. Theobald, who however was whispering to the surgeon at the bottom of the stairs, while I was concealed behind the door.

HEL. Sir John Myrtle!—that name is totally unknown to me——

ROSE. And then the surgeon added some words I did not hear, but I remember he said; [How great would be their surprize if they knew he was concealed here?]

HEL. You heard that?

ROSE. With both my ears——but that is all I could make out.

HEL. That is a great deal. 'Tis plain that Sir John Myrtle is concealed in this house——but to what end---and Baron Sanford knows it,

Since he mentioned him---surely the Baron is his uncle, or perhaps his father--but this mystery is incomprehensible ; I would give all the world I could discover it.

ROSE. And I too, I assure you.

HEL. In short, we at least know that Sir John Myrtle is concealed here, and that is enough to lead to the discovery of the rest before night-- [She looks at her watch.]-- But it is almost two o'clock, I must go to dinner. Farewell, Rose ; I thank you for your confidence ; you may depend upon it I will not abuse it-- Do not follow me, it is not necessary that we should be seen together ; do you go the other way.

ROSE. Very right ; we must be prudent.

[They go out.]

End of the First Act.

A C T H.

S C E N E I.

HELEN, [alone.]

ROSE is not here, where can she be?— Every one flies me, Mama avoids me ; I could not get an opportunity of speaking to her in private, that I might give her this letter—I equally vex my Mama, my sister, and cousin—I am reduced to take for a friend and confidante, a little peasant girl who has neither education nor principles, to whom I have taught my faults, while I receive nothing from her but bad advice!—Alas! I am very unhappy—[She falls into a reverie.]

SCENE II.

HELEN, ROSE.

ROSE [running.] Miss Helen, Miss. —

HEL. What is the matter?

ROSE. O, I have made a lucky discovery! I know in what part of the house Sir John Myrtle is concealed.

HEL. Well! — and how?

ROSE. You know your Mama's great closet at the end of the gallery?

HEL. Very well.

ROSE. Very well! why there he is nestled. —

HEL. You believe so?

ROSE. I'd lay a wager on it. — I had some suspicion of it by the taking away the key of the gallery and the closet; and besides, your Mama is always roaming there with the Steward and Surgeon. — I asked the Chamber-maid if she went there as usual, and she told me she has not entered the gallery these eight days, because my Lady had forbid. So you see plainly, the hiding place is found.

HEL. This is inconceivable! — what can all these precautions mean?

ROSE. O it is very droll; for my part I cannot fathom it.

HEL. My curiosity is raised to the highest pitch, I must own. —

ROSE. For my part I long excessively to discover all. — By the bye, Miss, have you given the letter to my Lady?

HEL. My God, no; Mama imagining that I

want to ask questions, would not give me a hearing ; she rejects me, she flies me, and all this to go and shut herself up with my sister and Cousin.

ROSE. But however we at least have the letter — it is still in your pocket ?

HEL. Yes, here it is.

ROSE. Letters can be read sometimes without breaking the seal.

HEL. It is needless to open the edge of this, there is nothing to be seen.

ROSE. Ah, you have been trying then

HEL. Yes, from heedlessness.

ROSE. By Gemini, I never fail to try it ; I attempt that trick every time I carry letters to the post ; it always serves to amuse me as I go along ; but unluckily I can't read writing very well. —

HEL. I am excessively embarrassed, I don't know what to do with this letter —

ROSE. Since my Lady won't have it, 'tis our's.

HEL. Yes, but what use can we make of it ?

ROSE. Use of a letter, forsooth ! you will read it, you that can read readily, and I will hear it.

HEL. I told you already that I neither will, nor ought to read it.

ROSE. But, Miss, I know nothing of these ways ; however you have tried to catch something by peeping at the edges, and if it had not been for the seal you would have read it five or six times over ; there can be no greater harm in breaking that plaguy little bit of wax. —

HEL. No, it were better to burn it.

ROSE. Yes, after we have read it ; come, give it me, I'll do the business.

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HEL. Besides, I don't know why I took charge of it, it was you to whom it was entrusted; it is not directed to me, I have no business with it.——

ROSE. No more than the child unborn; that is true, the letter is mine, you did wrong in taking it from me.

HEL. [giving it back to her.] Here, do with it what you please, I won't intermeddle.

ROSE. The seal is a going.

HEL. That is your affair.

ROSE. It has a good hold—by my faith 'tis done; there, it is open—But, Miss, what is the matter with you; you are struck speechless.

HEL. Ah, Rose, what have we done!

ROSE. Come, come, now let us read; we must not dally so, we may be surprised.

HEL. My heart beats.——

ROSE. Read however—and read out if you please; let me have my share.

HEL. [taking the letter and casting her eye over it.] It is not signed.

ROSE. Eh! that is not polite, not to put his name—but read however; let us hear what he says.

HEL. I tremble—[She reads aloud.] “Miss, my birth and fortune may perhaps entitle me to aspire to the honour of your hand.”——

ROSE. Oh, he has a mind to marry!——

HEL. [continuing.] “But the dread of your family having entered into engagements opposite to the wishes which I have presumed to form, withholds me, and prevents me from declaring myself. I was at first resolved to

“ avow my sentiments to my father, but I will
 “ not speak to him without your consent, and
 “ the consent of Lady Walcourt ; for I know
 “ you sufficiently, Miss, to be certain that this
 “ letter will be communicated to her.”

ROSE. O, he has reckoned without his host,
 but that is because he believed the letter was
 to be delivered to Miss Sophia.

HEL. My God, can't you hold your tongue ?
 [She continues.] “ I beg you will pardon the
 “ rashness of this proceeding ; the sentiment
 “ which has occasioned it should serve to plead
 “ my excuse, since it is much less founded on
 “ your charms, than on the reputation you
 “ have acquired by your understanding, accom-
 “ plishments, and virtue.”

ROSE. That is mighty pretty.

HEL. [continues.] “ Some extraordinary cir-
 “ cumstances oblige me not to appear but with
 “ precaution ; but if you will say one word, I
 “ shall that moment discover who I am. If
 “ you will deign to answer me, let it be put in
 “ the hollow of the old oak at the end of the
 “ avenue ; I shall go there this evening in
 “ quest of the decree that is to decide my fate.”

ROSE. Is that all ?

HEL. That is all. — What an extraordina-
 ry adventure !

ROSE. Do you conceive the meaning of
 this ? —

HEL. Yes, I begin to unravel the whole in-
 trigue, tho' still there are several circumstances
 which I cannot comprehend. — First of all,
 this unknown person is certainly Sir John Myr-
 tle, who remains here concealed.

ROSE. We guessed that already. But how could this unknown person see Miss Sophia, and then stroll in the village, and then ask questions of Mary-Jane, if he was shut up in this house?

HEL. It is because he is not kept a prisoner, and has the liberty of going out. —

ROSE. He speaks of his father in the letter.

HEL. O, his father is Baron Sanford. —

ROSE. Then he too should call himself Sanford.

HEL. Myrtle is perhaps the name of an estate — I fancy there was a match proposed between him and Constance, but having seen Sophia, he prefers her to my cousin.

ROSE. Upon my word, he is not far wrong; Miss Sophia is so very pretty; and then that prudent manner has taken his fancy.

HEL. And he has written to my sister that he may know her intentions.

ROSE. There you have hit it, you are certainly right.

HEL. But why conceal himself? — Sophia and my cousin know that he is here — but perhaps Mama does not choose that they should see each other till every thing is settled.

ROSE. Just so; by my troth, Miss, you are very clever — but one thing comes in my head; the poor Gentleman who loves Miss Sophia with all his heart, is going on a fool's errand to-night, when he will find nothing but oak leaves in the hollow of the tree instead of an answer. It would be a rare trick if you was to write to him.

HEL. Such nonsense! —

ROSE. But we shall at least see how he will look — he will come — what the plague, can't you tell him some idle stuff—it is of no great consequence---there is no great harm, sure. —

HEL. In short, if it is a good match, I would rather that he married my sister than Constance — then he loves Sophia, his intentions are honourable --- if Mama knew his sentiments, I am sure she would approve of them. —

ROSE. He is faint-hearted---without a little bit of an answer, he won't speak a word, and will go about his business; then adieu to the match.

HEL. A droll idea has come in my head; do you write to him.

ROSE. Most willingly, but I am not very good at writing; I must tell you beforehand that I can only make an O.

HEL. No matter for that, I will guide your hand.

ROSE. Well then, I am content — if we had wherewithal —

HEL. Stop, I have paper and a pencil in my pocket —

ROSE. Come, come, let us go to work—[She draws a chair.] This will do for a table—give me the paper. [She gets upon her knees on the ground before the chair; Helen takes her hand.]

HEL. Don't hold your fingers so stiff.

ROSE. 'Tis to make me do better, forsooth.

HEL. Well, let your hand move — make haste; if any one comes —

ROSE. O, your governess has the head-ach, your Mama and the young ladies are engaged with their secrets —

HEL. Well, let us begin—[She makes her write.]

ROSE. Tell me then what I write—Ah, it is quite crooked——

HEL. You won't let me guide your hand—There, it will do well enough—now it is done.

ROSE. Is it done? [They rise up.] Let me see if I can read it—there are but three words. [She reads.] You—you——

HEL. Give it me, I will tell you——[She reads.] You may appear.

ROSE. You may appear. I wrote that?

HEL. Yes.

ROSE. The scholmaster never made me do so much—Now I will go and carry it to the old oak.

HEL. Yes, but take good care you are not seen.

ROSE. O never fear——

HEL. Hearke'e, Rose—when the young man comes, he will explain himself to Mama and my sister; he will find that it was not Sophia that answered him; he will tell that he gave his letter in charge to you---think then that all is your doing, and don't go to throw it upon my shoulders.

ROSE. O! I will say that I read, and that I wrote——

HEL. Yes, but they know that you can neither read nor write——

ROSE. I will insist upon it that I have learnt, and made great progress all of a sudden.

HEL. Rose, give me back that note.

ROSE. No, no, it goes to the old oak.

HEL. Give it me, I am afraid of the consequences.

ROSE. No Miss, I won't part with it; I will see the gentleman.

HEL. But Rose, when I ask a thing——

ROSE. O, you may give yourself airs indeed---

HEL. You are exceedingly impertinent, and I insist upon having the note.——

ROSE. Softly Miss-- you get into schemes unknown to my Lady, you make me join in the plot, and then you talk to me as if you were Miss Sophia---there is some difference do you see---when people play pranks together, that makes them comrades---I am still only Rose to be sure, but by my faith you are no longer Miss Helen with me---marry, I am sorry to tell you this, but why do you behave to me so roughly?

HEL. [aside.] O heaven! to be so cruelly humbled --I can't bear it, I choak with rage---

ROSE. You need not be sullen for that, for my part, I think no more of it; I am passionate, but in a twinkling it is gone. I have no more gall in me than a child--come, Miss, don't make a wry face-- perhaps you will have need of me some other time, but you must not provoke me --- Hush! I hear a noise, somebody is coming, I must run; farewell, Miss, without any ill-will at least. [She goes out.]

HEL. [alone.] I am quite confounded---I am stifled with rage and shame--I have degraded myself; --I am insulted---I have deserved it---she will tell all to Mama; she will expose me in the most cruel manner; I cannot but expect it---there is no depending on the fidelity and attachment of those whom we have made to condemn us! ——

S C E N E III.

HELEN, CONSTANCE.

CON. [at the bottom of the stage.] Sophia is not here?

HEL. O, it is Constance——You are looking for my sister?——

CON. No, I was taking a walk.

HEL. You are violently disposed to give an air of mystery to every thing: ah! my God, spare yourself that unnecessary trouble——stop, here comes Sophia——

S C E N E IV.

HELEN, CONSTANCE, SOPHIA.

HEL. Come sister, Constance, is here, you may approach without fear; I am going.

SOP. What is the matter, Helen? still the same animosity?

HEL. I don't know if I have any animosity, but one thing certain is, that I am no longer curious, for I have discovered all that I wanted to know.

SOP. If you have discovered some secret you are more knowing than we.

HEL. Not more knowing, but as much.

SOP. [aside.] She alarms me in spite of me. [Aloud.] I do not know the meaning of your discourse, but you look melancholy, which alarms me——dear sister, what has happened to you?

HEL. It is true, I have more than one cause of vexation.

SOP. [with fear.] Do they relate—to what you think you have discovered? —

HEL. O, not at all —

SOP. [aside.] O, I recover, she knows nothing.

HEL. In short, it will very soon be no secret at all—and what is concealed at present, will be no mystery to-morrow.

SOP. [uneasy.] What is concealed! —

CON. [low to Sophia.] Good God, does she know it!

HEL. You seem quite disturbed—I cannot resist laughing at their stupified looks —

SOP. [low to Constance.] Her gaiety shews that she knows nothing; but what can she mean to say? —

HEL. I should be glad to see him—however, he has not made choice of me for a confidante, it is not to me that his letters are addressed—Ah! my God, what is the matter—how pale she is!—Sophia!—O support her!— [She runs to her.]

SOP. Leave me—ah! if it is true that you know—but no, her heart is good---can she make sport of it—Helen, for heaven's sake explain yourself —

HEL. Into what astonishment have you in your turn thrown me --- Sophia almost fainting, Constance pale and trembling. — What can be the cause of this dreadful confusion -- what have I said?

SOP. [Aside.] She knows nothing of our secret, and I have betrayed myself. —

HEL. Sophia, you cannot restrain your tears,

and 'tis I have been the cause——ah! my dear sister, that idea wings my very heart——why this terrible vexation? Do you suspect me of jealousy? Ah! I am incapable of it. His vows are sincere and affectionate, and offered up solely for the happiness of Sophia.——I will no longer dissemble with you; no, sister, I am but half informed, and undoubtedly very soon we shall neither of us understand each other. Be calm then and answer me.

SOP. [Aside.] I must endeavour to repair my indiscretion. [To Helen.] Well, I own there is a secret which engages our attention.——In short, Helen, you have been so industrious that you forced an expression from me which ought never to have passed these lips.——Discretion and prudence are virtues no longer to be preserved where you are.

HEL. What a bitter reproach! is this the return you make to my friendship?

SOP. You love me, yet you make me fail in my duty!——But let us have done, I will neither displease nor offend you. I have only to say, that the emotion you observed was occasioned by nothing but surprize: you said with such seeming sincerity that you knew all, I believed it, and——

HEL. The particulars I mentioned relate then to what you know?

SOP. I did not hear these particulars, my uneasiness prevented me from comprehending the meaning of them——but I assure you that the secret which has been entrusted to me, has nothing in it, either important or singular ---- I

can perceive that you are ill informed. If you will explain yourself openly——

HEL. If I am mistaken, will you tell me the truth?

SOP. Perhaps.——

HEL. Perhaps, won't do --- no, I have no title to your confidence, and I do not expect to gain it; you have told me so in language too severe to leave me in doubt; so you may preserve your anxiety, you shall not know my secret.

SOP. If Mama asks you, you will be obliged to tell her.——

HEL. Threat'nings!---Sister, don't try that method; it is unworthy of you, and can have no effect upon me.

CON. Ought Sophia to leave my aunt uninformed of faults, which nothing but the authority of a mother can correct?

HEL. I have but this to say; I may be threatened, I may be exposed to the anger of my mother, and driven to despair—but force and violence shall not avail with me.

SOP. Mad creature!—cannot the sacred authority of a mother oblige you to tell a secret, which perhaps without hesitation you would entrust with the first person who would ask you—what do I know—it may be to Rose, the gardener's daughter, if she pressed you.—Ah! sister, how you abuse the natural good qualities which are at the bottom of your heart; they are not regulated by principle, nor guided by reflection, and only serve to mislead you—but in short you may depend upon it, that it shall not be thro' me your Mama shall be informed

of what she should only learn from your repentance and your confidence in her.

HEL. [aside.] How she makes me blush at the faults with which she reproaches me, and those likewise of which she is ignorant! —

CON. But night comes on — we must go into the house, besides the weather looks tempestuous. — Somebody comes — 'tis Rose, what does she want? —

SCENE V.

HELEN, CONSTANCE, SOPHIA, ROSE.

ROSE. My Lady sent me to acquaint you that she is to sup in her own chamber, because she wants to go to bed by times.

HEL. Is she not well? —

ROSE. I believe not, for she is much changed.

HEL. Let us go and ask her how she does.

SOP. We will follow you.

HEL. Come along — [She goes out. Rose follows.]

SCENE IV.

SOPHIA, CONSTANCE,

SOP. [stopping Constance.] One moment, Constance, --- Mama is not sick --- she wants not to be troubled with supper, that the family may go to bed the sooner. —

CON. But your brother does not set out till two hours after midnight.

SOP. No, but Mama has consented that I shall take leave of him, and you may likewise

go, Constance --- and that we may be with him at midnight, without being suspected, Helen must be in bed before eleven, for if she is not asleep before we make our escape, she will hear us. --- But now I have mentioned Helen, have you any conception of what she wanted to say? --- She knows that there is some one concealed here --- she mentioned letters, and confidence. -- I trembled, and had almost betrayed myself; however, I am convinced from what she said afterwards, that she only spoke at random. --

CON. O that is certain; she imagines there is an intention to marry you, and that your intended husband is to appear and declare himself to-morrow. _____

SOP. I endeavoured to mislead her as much as possible. I was very desirous to make her explain herself clearly. _____

CON. She is now with my aunt, and I flatter myself with the hopes, that of herself, she will own all she thinks she knows.

SOP. I thought of that, and therefore was not sorry she went alone, for perhaps she would have been restrained by our presence.

CON. I have not seen you in private since your last conversation with my aunt; do you know I was a little embarrassed when she communicated the whole to me? You did not let me know before hand that you would acquaint her with my being in the secret.

SOP. It was from my brother she has since learned that he had admitted me to his confidence; he freely owned that he had written to me, and that you were informed at the same

time. Lest Mama should accuse my brother of imprudence, I chose to be silent.

CON. She asked you no questions then with regard to me?

SOP. No, for you know very well that I could not tell her a falsehood. --- But what o'clock is it?

CON. Just eight. ———

SOP. 'Tis still four hours till midnight. --- Alas! I wish the time to pass, and yet in proportion as the moment approaches my melancholy and agitation increase - - and Mama --- ah! what she suffers. -- After an absence of four months I am to embrace my brother, to see him but for an instant --- and to bid him adieu --- perhaps never to see him more! ———

CON. However, at least we shall not be apprehensive for his life; he is now well, and nothing can prevent his departure. ———

SOP. Theobald tells me that he was pale and dreadfully weak. --- I even dread the interview this night; he loves us so, and has such sensibility. -- He wants to see Helen, and if it was not for Mama, he would not restrain his desire of bidding her adieu. --- Even she, what will become of her when she comes to know our misfortune? --- I see at once, all our vexation; every moment, every reflexion, adds to its bitterness.

CON. One of those, which I am the least capable of supporting, is the hateful cruel presence of Baron Sanford. ———

SOP. My God, do you know what a question he asked Mama this evening?

CON. No, not I.

SOP. He took it into his head, for the first time, to ask if she had a son: at these words, she reddened, and then turned pale; her looks were disturbed, her eyes filled with tears, she stammered some unintelligible words; in short, I thought she was going to discover all. —

CON. You were present then?

SOP. I was directly opposite to her, and undoubtedly my countenance, in spite of me, expressed what was painted on her's. However, she very soon recovered herself; I thought I observed the Baron to have an astonished confused look, but he soon resumed his usual appearance, and perhaps my prepossession misled me. This unfortunate affair is so out of the common road, that it seems to me impossible to be traced, at least I endeavour to flatter myself with that hope.

ROSE [coming back.] Ladies, supper waits you.

SOP. Come, my dear Constance. [They go out.]

ROSE [alone.] What the plague is Miss Helen doing in the Parterre with Baron Sanford? they chat as if they had been acquainted these ten years! She must pass this way in going to her chamber; I shall wait for her. — She is vexed because my Lady would not see her. — Miss Sophia is preferred in every thing, and it is but right, for she is the pink of fine girls. But I feel some drops of rain. — It is cold this evening. — The letter will be wet if it is not already carried away. — I shall not go to bed, for the Gentleman will come, and I must see him, one of the first, since I had the trouble to carry the letter — ha, here is Miss Helen.

SCENE VII.

ROSE, HELEN.

ROSE. My God, Miss, you seem quite confounded, what is the matter with you?

HEL. [throwing herself on a chair.] I don't know what imprudence I have been guilty of — but certainly I have done something wrong. — I am quite exhausted. —

ROSE. What has happened to you? —

HEL. Did you see Baron Sanford go past?

ROSE. No — but you was with him just now; has he told you any bad news? Speak, Miss, let me know what vexes you, perhaps we may find a remedy.

HEL. Alas, I have nothing but fears, and not one fixed idea; but I will tell you what happened. You know Mama would not admit me, I went from her quite melancholy, and met Baron Sanford walking alone in the Parterre; he observed that I had been crying, he approached me, and asked me some questions: I simply told him the occasion of my grief, and added, that I plainly saw Mama would not see me because she dreaded my curiosity. —

ROSE. Did he acknowledge that? He must be in the secret! —

HEL. Is it because you believe, said he to me, that she conceals some secret from you? — Upon which I replied that I was certain of it. He redoubled his questions; I owned to him that I knew a part of the secret, that I was

not ignorant of Sir John Myrtle's being concealed in the great closet at the end of the gallery——When I had spoken these words, he shuddered, he exclaimed ; “ What a discovery ! ” And at the same instant he quitted me with precipitation——

ROSE. What the plague does he mean with his discovery ?

HEL. I don't know—but he appeared as if he had been informed of some surprising dreadful news !—His eyes seemed to kindle with rage, the sound of his voice was frightful——O heaven, I still tremble when I think of it.

ROSE. Ugly old fellow, to frighten you so !

HEL. Rose, do you go to my mother—Alas ! I am debarred entrance, but perhaps you will gain admittance ; speak to her, tell her ingenuously all my faults, all that has happened to us ; beg of her from me that she will condescend to give me a hearing : go I pray you—

ROSE. But, Miss, I will not go and inform against you.

HEL. Assist me to atone for my faults ; this, Rose, is the last service I shall require of you, and, I pray you, do not refuse me. I have hitherto set you very bad examples, my girl ; ah ! may you forget them, and from henceforth be only struck with my repentance.——

ROSE. You break my heart, Miss—My God ! be of comfort——go to your chamber, it is ten o'clock, and perhaps the ladies are waiting for you to supper.

HEL. Undoubtedly they imagine I have the happiness to be with mama.

ROSE. The moon is quite hid, we are going to have a storm—there is not a glimpse of light to be seen——— will you take hold of my arm till you get to the stair case ?

HEL. No, I can go very well alone——— but don't you hear a noise ?

ROSE. Yes, somebody is coming this way.

HEL. I think I see a light ?

ROSE. Yes truly ; my God, I am afraid.

HEL. Hush, don't speak. [They listen.

SCENE VIII.

ROSE HELEN, LADY WALCOURT.

L. WAL. [with a lanthorn in her hand says, at the bottom of the stage] Every one is gone to bed ; I shall wait here for Sophia and Constance to conduct them.—I hear the noise of feet.

ROSE. [softly to Helen] Good God, it is my lady——— answer her, Miss.

HEL. I tremble.———

L. WAL. [coming so ward, discovers Helen by the light of the lanthorn. Rose escapes.] What do I see !—What, is this you, Helen—what are you doing here at this time of night ?

HEL. Dear mama, I pray you, pardon me, and listen to me one moment I entreat you.

L. WAL. [placing the lanthorn on the ground] What can you say to me, what excuse can you plead? — Every one is gone to bed, 'tis night, it begins to rain; the wind and cold threaten a dreadful storm, and you are here alone, what can be your design? Alas! I know it but too, too well—you are watching to spy my actions, to discover my secrets——for I am not ignorant that you suspect I have some—if I have any, and there be a worthy sentiment in your breast, tremble at the discovery, if they are of consequence——are they not of equal importance to you as well as me?—and do you persuade yourself that you have reason and prudence sufficient not to betray them?

HEL. Alas! mama, I but too well deserve such cruel suspicions; after what I have already done, I dare not make you a promise for my conduct in future; but I repent, I am sensible of the whole extent of my faults; I grieve for them, and my attention is entirely engaged in the desire of repairing them if possible.

L. WAL. But why are you here without your governess, without your sister and in the dark?

HEL. I was with Rose; I was talking to her of my distresses.

L. WAL. With Rose! Is that proper company for you, Helen? You have a mother, you have a sister, and such a sister! She sets you an example of every virtue and every accomplishment; she is admired by all who approach her; she loves you, and yet it is not her whom you consult, nor her whom you choose for your

friend.—A little rustic, a peasant girl ! Rose, in short, must be the confidante of your secrets. Don't you blush at such a degradation ?

HEL. Alas ! I do justice to Sophia, and likewise to myself ; I neither deserve such a mother, nor such a sister. ——— But I have been rejected, I have been repulsed and avoided—— what can I do ?

L. WAL. Reflect and amend. But go into the house, 'tis ten o'clock ; get to bed, and in a little time I will be with you to be assured of your obedience. I suspected that you were here, and therefore came hither, for otherwise I have no business here.

HEL. So the whole day must pass, and I cannot have an opportunity of speaking with you. Farewell, I leave you, mama, I obey you ;—— but one word with you is very important to me ; my heart is cruelly oppressed ; I am much to be pitied ! ———

L. WAL. Helen, you are naturally ingenuous, will you promise to answer truly to the question I am going to ask you ?

HEL. Yes, mama, you may depend upon it.

L. WAL. Well then, whether is it from curiosity or a desire to obtain an explanation, which makes you leave me at present with so much regret ?

HEL. Mama, I followed you this morning from motives of curiosity ; the rest of the day I endeavoured to speak with you that I might confess my faults, and at this instant nothing detains me with you but affection. I observe

that you are agitated, that you have some secret cause of vexation, I bitterly feel the dreadful regret of not being able to share it with you, but I have no desire to discover it. I am not worthy your confidence, I do not pretend to it; but while you suffer, allow me the melancholy satisfaction of mixing my tears with yours. Do not fear my questions; let my mama be under no restraint with me, let her tears flow into the bosom of a daughter that loves her; 'tis all that she presumes to request.

L. WAL. With such sentiments, with such a feeling heart, how can you have any remaining faults! Time will correct them; yes, Helen, I hope it will —— you have made me read it in your heart. Well then, since you desire it, know the state of mine. I am distracted with the most dreadful apprehensions, and what completes my vexation is, that I cannot trust the knowledge of it with you. My girl, thou who art so dear to me, thou for whom I would sacrifice my life, I conceal from thee, what I have not been afraid to discover to Theobald and Gerard, two domestics! I depend upon their fidelity, and dare not trust to thine!

HEL. O mama, thou best and most affectionate of mothers, you fill my soul at once with remorse and gratitude. What! to be capable of alleviating your sorrows, and to add to them; I might have been your friend, and was only a dangerous spy upon your conduct, whose indiscretion and curiosity was equally to be dreaded! Gracious God, what a dreadful and striking lesson for me!

L. WAL. At this moment, my dear child, you repay me for all my past sufferings. How happy shall I be when I can behave to you as I do to Sophia! She has my confidence, but my love to you is as great as to her, and our most pleasing conversations are poisoned with the cruel regret of not daring to admit you to share them.

HEL. Ah, mama! Sophia must console you for my faults, and is therefore more dear to me. Yes, heaven owed you a daughter like Sophia.

L. WAL. Good God, what noise is this I hear?

HEL. I think I can distinguish my sister's voice.

L. WAL. Good heaven! what has happened.
—— I quake with fear.

HEL. It is my sister.

SCENE IX.

SOPHIA, HELEN, LADY WALCOURT,
ROSE enters a little after.

L. WAL. Sophia! —— is it you?

SOP. Ah, mama! we are ruined. ——

L. WAL. Good heaven! ——

SOP. Baron Sanford knows that Sir John Myrtle is here.

L. WAL. Is it possible?

SOP. He has guessed the rest; he is quite furious. He has already dispatched two couriers;

he has ordered his horses, and is going to set out himself.

L. WAL. Great God ! ———

SOP. He is going to take every precaution—flight is now impossible ; all our hopes are destroyed———Ah, mama !———

L. WAL. Who could betray us ? ———It could not be Gerrard nor Theobald !———

HEL. [throwing herself at her feet.] What do I hear ! ———No, mama, accuse none but me.

L. WAL. What is that you say ?——O heaven !

HEL. Alas ! I was ignorant of the mischief I have been doing ; but I discovered that Sir John Myrtle was concealed in this house, and it was I told it to Baron Sanford.———

L. WAL. Wretched creature ! ———that Sir John Myrtle is your brother ; he fought and killed the son of Baron Sanford, and you have discovered him to his mortal enemy !

HEL. O God !

L. WAL. You bring your brother to the scaffold ; you stab to the heart a distracted mother ; in short, you destroy your unhappy family ; there, there is the fatal consequence of your guilty curiosity.

HEL. O, I die.———

[She falls in a swoon at her mother's feet.

SOP. Ah, my sister ! ——

ROSE. She is in a swoon ! ———

L. WAL. Rose, take care of her—and we will go and throw ourselves at the feet of Ba-

ron Sanford. Come, Sophia, come, we must prevail with him or die.

[They both run out in haste.]

SCENE X.

HELEN, in a swoon, ROSE.

ROSE. So they are gone! My God, what shall I do here alone? Miss Helen!—Miss Helen!—Ah! she is like death itself!—and lying on the wet grass!—how she is to be pitied!—The rain increases!—Oh my God, what thunder! what a tempest! I am terrified.——But I cannot leave this young lady.—If I could raise her up a little.—I have not strength!—---I don't hear her breathe. I begin to be afraid.——O my God, what a clap of thunder!—---I have not a drop of blood in my veins! [She takes hold of Helen's hand] She is cold as ice. My God, my God, have mercy upon her. It is so dark I cannot see where I am! I would place her on the grass seat, but I don't know where it is. Ah, there is a lanthorn somewhere. [She goes to find the lanthorn which Lady Walcourt had laid on the ground; then returns to Helen, and looks at her by the light of the lanthorn.] Heavens, how pale she is! her hair is wet. I must absolutely move her from hence. [She lays down the lanthorn and attempts to raise Helen] It is so slippery!—---O, what a flash of lightning!—---There,

God be praised, I have done it. [She places Helen upon the grass seat, and holds her in her arms.] I think she sighs———Ah, she recovers.

HEL. Where am I! O mama---where is she?———

ROSE. You are alone with me, Miss---with Rose.

HEL. My brother---what is become of him?

ROSE. I know nothing new; I have not been from you.

HEL. I have exposed him———his life is in danger---ah, let us run---I cannot.———

[She fall back upon the turf seat.

ROSE. O Lord, she is going to faint again!

———Miss Helen!———

HEL. What! cannot I die?---My brother --- Perhaps he is carried off --- and 'tis I, 'tis I, that have devoted him to death! --- I cannot drag myself to my mother --- my strength forsakes me. --- I must expire then where I am --- forgotten, abandoned by all that is dear to me!

ROSE. Do you hear these cries?

HEL. Good God, all my blood freezes! --- Ah, undoubtedly at this moment my unhappy brother is torn from the arms of his distracted mother.

ROSE. The noise increases --- O heaven, I believe they are breaking open the gate.

HEL. I cannot stand. --- Run, Rose, and see what is the matter——— fly.

ROSE. I go --- I will be back presently.

[She goes, and carries the lanthorn with her.

VOL. I.

R

SCENE XI.

HEL. [alone] O brother, brother ! what will be thy fate ! Into what a dreadful abyfs have I plunged my family ! My mother hates me, and I deferve it. Dreadful was the moment when I faw that affectionate mother push me from her with horror, and overwhelm me with the weight of her juft resentment. --- Ah ! the found of that dreadful, much-loved voice ftill ftrikes my ear ! --- But what do I hear ? What noife of horfes and carriages ! what a dreadful tumult ! [A loud clap of thunder is heard ; Helen rifes frightened ; the thunder and lightning continue violent ; Helen runs about the ftage difmayed : all her motions fhould be expreffive of great fear ; at laft fhe returns, and falls upon the feat of the turf, and the thunder ceafes. After being a confiderable time filent,] The night, the difmal darknefs, the frightful thunder --- all feem to unite, in adding to the difmay with which I am oppreffed. Death will at laft put an end to thefe cruel torments : ah ! may it be as fpeedy as my remorse is gal-ling ! Some one comes ; O heaven, what fhall I hear !

SCENE XII.

HELEN, ROSE.

ROSE. Miss, Miss! —————

HEL. Well?

ROSE. Good news, good news. —————

HEL. My God, what is it? what, about my brother; tell me?

ROSE. Whereabouts are you? 'tis so dark!

HEL. Come hither. [She steps towards Rose.] Where is my brother?

ROSE. All is over; matters are accommodated.

HEL. Is it possible? Don't you deceive me?

ROSE. They are all happy. --- With my own two eyes, I saw Baron Sanford in tears embrace your brother.

HEL. My brother?

ROSE. Yes, he himself. But that is not all. --- You stagger --- my God, you are going to fall! —————

HEL. Ah, Rose! my dear Rose, embrace me; alas! I have none but you, either to share my joys or sorrow!

ROSE. Sit down then, Miss; you tremble.

HEL. Baron Sanford embrace my brother! --- What wonderful cause could produce this happy change?

ROSE. The Baron's son is not killed --- on the contrary, he is much better than your bro-

ther ; he arrived at the very instant his father, notwithstanding the tears and lamentations of your mother, was going to set off.

HEL. Ah ! my God ——— and the young man is here ?

ROSE. By gemini, yes sure --- and the finest part of the story is, he is our correspondent.

HEL. How !

ROSE. Yes truly, it was he that wrote to Miss Sophia ; he loves her. He heard speak of her at Valenciennes, and from that moment her reputation touched his heart ; and so, after having fought in the neighbourhood, he remained insensible upon the spot, I don't know how long, till some of the country-folks carried him home with them ; he gave them a good deal of money to keep his secret ; and so, he heard still talk of Miss Sophia : in short, he got speedily cured because his wound was not dangerous, and his desire to see Miss Sophia made him scamper over the country as soon as he could walk. In short, he has seen her, he has heard her, he has written to her, and so, he came to throw himself at his father's feet, and tell him all this.

HEL. O heaven ! what a happy discovery ! — But how could you know all these particulars ?

ROSE. I asked every body, and then I made my way into the saloon, where I saw and heard what I have been just now telling you ; the doors are thrown open ; masters, and servants, and all the family are assembled. I saw my lady between Miss Sophia and Miss Constance ;

she was ready to die with joy at seeing Baron Sanford and his son embrace your brother. O that young Sanford is a good-looking young man ; he is as handsome as your brother. It is said he was very much surpris'd when he knew that he had fought against the brother of Miss Sophia ; he cried, like a child, at the thought of it ; but now he is very happy, for my lady and the baron have given their consents, and the wedding is to be to-morrow.

HEL. Rose, do you think, my mother observed you ?

ROSE. O no, I was behind every body ; and then she saw nobody but her children : I heard her say, Ah ! what a happy mother am I !

HEL. She forgets that I am her daughter ! --- My heart is rent asunder. --- At present I am the only one to be pitied. Now that I am freed from the mortal disquiet which consumed me, why do my tears flow with the same bitterness ? My mother, in the arms of Sophia and Constance, forgets that the unfortunate Helen exists. --- Nothing is wanting to her happiness, and yet she has left her unhappy daughter without help and dying. See to what excessive severity I have, by my faults, provoked the best and most indulgent of mothers ! --- A frightful and dreadful lesson ! I had the most affectionate of mothers ; I was a much-loved sister ; but, now, forgotten and neglected, I am less in the eyes of my family than a stranger ! --- Alas ! I must lament my misfortunes ; but I cannot complain, in what I have brought upon myself.

SCENE XIII.

HELEN, ROSE, SOPHIA, followed by some servants carrying torches, and who remain at the bottom of the stage.

SOP. Where is she ? where is she ?

HEL. O heavens ! 'tis my sister.

SOP. [running and embracing her.] My dear Helen, all our sorrows are at an end ; come, my brother burns with impatience to embrace you ; my mother asks for you.

HEL. [embracing her] Ah ! sister, I know all. — But does my mother ask for me ! — Is it true ?

SOP. Come to her arms, my sister — she expects you, she longs to see you.

HEL. Alas ! how can I present myself before her ?

SOP. All is forgotten, she thinks only of your sorrow. Our feeling mother shudders at the thoughts of what you must have suffered — she considers only your affliction, and has no uneasy apprehensions for what is to come.

HEL. Alas ! I will justify her hopes, and from henceforth will only live to atone for those faults of which I am made doubly sensible by her kindness. Come, dear Sophia, lead me to her, that I may throw myself at her feet ! — I certainly hear the voices of my mother and brother.

SOP. 'Tis she. ———

HEL. O God ! ———

[Lady Walcourt appears at the bottom of the stage, supported on one side by her son, on the other by Constance ; Lord Walcourt quits his mother to go and embrace Helen, who rushes into his arms, and then runs to throw herself at the feet of her mother, who faints in the arms of Lord Walcourt and Sophia, and is supported behind by Constance. The curtain drops.

T H E E N D.

D

THE
DANGERS OF THE WORLD,

A

COMEDY,
IN THREE ACTS.



THE PERSONS.

The Marchioness of GERMAINE.

The Viscountess DORMER, Friend of the Marchioness.

Lady JEMIMA, Aunt of the Marchioness.

JULIET, the Marchioness's maid,

A MILLINER.

A VALET.

A LACQUEY.

Scene at Paris, in the house of the Marchioness.





T H E
D A N G E R S O F T H E W O R L D ,

A
C O M E D Y ,

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

The Stage represents a Saloon, where a Toilet is seen, upon which are Books and an Ink-stand.

JULIET [holding papers, and speaking at the side of the stage.]

N O, I tell you once more my lady is not at home ; take away your trumpery, and get about your business. These Milliners distract me. Well, thank God, there is one gone. O that I could but drive away all the rest.——
What a train have we here every morning ! the

hall is so filled with shopkeepers, factors, and creditors, there is no knowing which to attend to.—Here are a parcel of bills I am desired to deliver to my Lady :—they must all be paid ; but how !—If this goes on I shall die with vexation.—Let me examine a little, to how much these cursed bills amount.—[She opens one.] Ay, this is the cabinet-maker's. [She reads.] For a little table, ten guineas.—For a chiffonniere, fifteen guineas ; for a bureau forty pounds. It was highly necessary to lay out forty pounds for a bureau to write to the Viscountess Dormer, for, thank heaven, that is my Lady's chief employment.—To pass their lives together and to write to each other regularly ten times a day ; —'tis rather affectation than friendship.—My dear mistress, you that was so sincere and unaffected, what a change !—But let me go on. [She reads.] For a little writing desk, ten pounds. For a large desk, fifteen pounds. For a paper case with a secret drawer —This is enough to drive one distracted. To see such a bill, one would think it was for a minister who had the care of all the affairs of the nation. Let me see the total [She reads.] total, two hundred and eighty pounds. Enough to make one's hair stand an end.—And this one. [She reads.] For a breakfast service of Seve China, a double cypher of myrtle and roses, twelve pounds. For two vases, double cyphered with amaranths and pansies twenty pounds. For a group representing the confidence of two young people, six pounds. For a tea-

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table, &c. &c. &c. Total four hundred and ten pounds. Is it credible ! O, here is one surely cannot be so dear, for it is all of hair. [She reads in glancing it over.] Rings of hair, watch of hair, chain of hair, bracelets of hair, seal of hair, necklace of hair, box of hair : total four hundred and ninety-five pounds. Four hundred and ninety-five pounds in hair !—Good heavens, what extravagance !—My poor mistress ! 'tis all over ; she runs to ruin.—With a genteel, but limited fortune, how can she support all this ? My Lord is absent ; what will he say at his return ? How can my Lady, who is naturally so good and so delicate, abuse the confidence of a husband who is so dear to her, to such excess ? —'Tis that fool, that Viscountess Dormer that misleads her.—Fatal connection, cursed friendship. I cannot go on with the reading of these bills, they pierce me to the heart !—I must put the toilet in order before my Lady comes back to dress. [In ranging the things on the toilet she perceives a figure in biscuit.] Ha ! what is this ? a figure in biscuit.——She holds a dog.——Ay 'tis friendship, and a present from the Viscountess. Now must we go a shopping all day to find something equally ingenious to bestow upon her.—But somebody comes ; 'tis Lady Jemima.

SCENE II.

JULIET, LADY JEMIMA.

JUL. Please to wait a moment, my Lady, till I go and acquaint my mistress.

L. JEM. No ; she is in her closet engaged in business, I won't incommode her ; and besides, my dear Juliet, I am very glad of an opportunity to have a little conversation with you. After an absence of ten months and being returned but eight days, I have a number of questions to ask.

JUL. I owe every thing to you, Madam, my education, my situation, my existence, are all derived from your goodness, and you may depend upon my sincerity, which shall be pure as my gratitude.

L. JEM. Your attachment, my dear Juliet, to my niece and me, is the most pleasing recompence I could wish, in return for the care I took of you in your infancy. I know the soundness of your understanding, and the steadiness of your temper ; I am confident you give my niece the most prudent advice ; but does she follow it exactly ?—As I am but just arrived, I am still ignorant ; however, I own to you, I have already observed several little things which displease me.

JUL. Ah, Madam, your absence has been fatal to us !——

L. JEM. O heaven ! you frighten me !——

JUL. Don't be uneasy, Madam, all may be recovered. Lady Germaine is always good, and deserves your affection : but, do not leave us again.

L. JEM. Alas ! you know with what reluctance I left her ; but I was compelled to it by the necessity of settling my own affairs ; I depended on her disposition, and the education I had given her ; besides, she was twenty, and her reason seemed to me superior to her age : I introduced her into the world, and after having observed and followed her almost a year, I thought I might absent myself from her without danger, and I left her in the hands of her mother-in-law, not without vexation, but at least with security.

JUL. And one of our greatest misfortunes is, that her mother-in-law is very old, naturally a weak woman, and for these six months is become almost childish.

L. JEM. How came it that you did not acquaint me with this ?

JUL. Because I had but few opportunities of seeing her, tho' we live in her house, and did not know it till very lately, and when we were in daily expectation of your return.

L. JEM. It is true my return was delayed.

JUL. My Lady being absent from you and the Marchioness, left entirely to herself, having but little experience (perhaps more fatal than a total ignorance, because it gives confidence and presumption) tho' good, virtuous, and of great sensibility, but weak and giddy, has not been

able to resist the danger of bad advice ; she ruins herself by foolish expences, buys every thing, pays nothing, loses all relish for employment, neglects her talents to give herself up to dissipation, which does not even afford her amusement. I see her return home in the evening, repenting of the use she has made of the day, her heart and mind equally empty, fatigued and worn out, and next day, without pleasure, but from habit, returning to the same round of life.

L. JEM. Good heaven, what do you tell me ? And what will her husband say, he who had such a high opinion of her disposition and understanding, who dreaded the tiresome life she would lead in a remote part of the country, and therefore brought her to town, resigned her into the arms of his mother, and at setting out, gave orders to his Steward to let her have whatever money she desired ? What, could not such proofs of confidence and esteem restrain her ? Does she not know that she could not abuse it without dishonouring herself, and without becoming for ever unworthy of such indulgence ?

JUL. Ah ! Madam, do not accuse her heart.

L. JEM. What signifies a good heart if her conduct and manner of life are in perpetual contradiction to her sentiments ?

JUL. To grieve for it, and to amend.

L. JEM. To amend ! and is that always practicable ? No. They who can be guilty of weighty faults, rarely think of the possibility

of making a reparation ; or to express myself better, to suppose such a calculation, is chimerical ; misled and seduced, can they still preserve the use of their reason or the power of reflecting ? How could such plain ideas which I have so often offered to the attention of my niece, be defaced from her remembrance ? —

JUL. Perhaps, Madam, my attachment makes me exaggerate the dangers of her situation ; I am not perfectly acquainted with the state of her affairs, and they may not be in such bad order as I imagine.

L. JEM. However, they must be speedily set to rights, and before the return of the Marquis, who is expected very soon.

JUL. Ah Madam ! why has he deferred it so long ?

L. JEM. Alas ! he expected to be only six months absent : the same fatality which detained me at my house in the country, delayed him in Germany, where he was called to succeed his uncle. But now he informs me that his business is settled, and he has happily got rid of all his embarrassments, he therefore flatters himself with the hopes of being here by the end of the month.

JUL. What a revolution will this return occasion ! — My Lady dreads, yet desires it.

L. JEM. Inconsistency, repentance and regret, are the fruits of levity and imprudence. It seems, my dear Juliet, that in spite of the frailty of the human race, our natural state is a state of

reason, for when we cease to be reasonable, we are tormented and distracted by trouble and perturbation ; we are no longer in harmony with ourselves ; in short, without reason we cannot enjoy either happiness or tranquility, and disgust always accompanies the false pleasures which it rejects. [She looks at her watch.] But time flies ; my niece will be here presently, and I have still a thousand questions to ask. Tell me, Juliet, what is the character of the Viscountess Dormer ? She seems to be giddy, and her connection with my niece —

JUL. Ah Madam ! it is that cursed connection which is the cause of all our misfortunes. The Viscountess has a good heart, she is naturally well disposed ; she is candid, incapable of envy or any mean sentiment ; but she has all the defects which a bad education can give, a want of understanding and excessive levity ; always unemployed, always seeking amusement, and without one idea of what can make her truly happy, she seeks happiness where it never can be found. Schemes for entertainments, going to public places, balls, the desire of being seen, of being the best dressed, to invent a fashion, in short, to pass for the person whose company is the most desired in society, who is most splendid, most agreeable ; these are the only ideas with which her mind is filled. To these irregularities she adds a thousand ridiculous pretensions ; she affects great sensibility ; a determined taste for the arts ; music and painting

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delight her ; she says, she passes the night in reading ; she values herself on her Philosophy and Benevolence ; these two fine words are constantly in her mouth ; she attends lectures on natural philosophy, and chemistry, is deficient in all her lessons, learns nothing, knows nothing, talks on every subject, decides imperiously, sometimes imposes on fools, and is an object of pity to all people of common sense.

L. JEM. What a picture !

JUL. In spite of all these follies, as she has a title and ten thousand a year, she is in the ton ; people laugh at her, ridicule her weakness and even abuse her conduct, but she keeps a good house, has boxes at the Play-house and Opera, and she is young and beautiful : these advantages are not sufficient to procure esteem and sincere respect ; but by possessing them, she is sure of being courted, and that is all the Viscountess desires ; she reflects too little, she has not understanding, elevation of mind or delicacy of sentiment sufficient to carry her pretensions a bit farther.

L. JEM. And that is the friend whom my niece has chosen ?

JUL. She threw herself in my Lady's way, who would never have sought after her, but yielded to her advances. The reputation of the Marchioness, at that time perfect in every respect, what was said of her understanding, her education, her accomplishments, the encomiums that were made on her character and conduct,

in short all these advantages united, inspired the Viscountess with a desire of being intimate with her : not that she could be sensible of these good qualities, or know how to value them, but because she thought that her intimacy with Lady Germaine would be an additional air of importance. My lady, flattered by the advances of the Viscountess, was pleased with the motive which she easily penetrated, however she pretended to mistake them, and ascribed them to friendship, that she might have a right to return them. Besides, Lady Dormer, in spite of all her irregularities, her caprice and foolish pretensions, is not without some agreeable qualities, when she forgets the different parts in which she wishes to exhibit ; she is ingenuous, open and chearful ; she will never gain a friend, but she is sometimes amiable ; and if she cannot interest you, she is at least frequently entertaining. My Lady was at first exceedingly struck with her follies ; afterwards, habit made them appear not so considerable, and what is incredible, she has at last adopted several of them.

L. JEM. I think I hear a door opening—Perhaps 'tis my Niece coming—Hearkee, Juliet, be careful to conceal this conversation, and endeavour to procure a particular knowledge of the state of her affairs, this day if possible, and acquaint me with it in the evening. Besides, she will perhaps intrust me herself with her embarrassment.

JUL. Ah ! Madam, her gratitude, and her

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affection for you are excessive, but she is so high minded ! She is so much indebted to you ! No, the very dread of the assistance you may offer her, will prevent her from placing that confidence in you, of which you are so deserving.

L. JEM. She is not afraid to abuse the confidence of her husband, and dares not in that extremity have recourse to me ! Ah, Juliet ! let us not confound pride with true delicacy ; the one misleads and is a source of ingratitude ; but the other is the most sure and intelligent guide which sense and reason can choose. What ! to condemn the benefits of friendship ; to have the foolish and guilty weakness of blushing to accept what it is desirous of offering ! To expose herself to the danger of being ruined rather than apply to her true friend, to one who has always been as a mother to her ; to be afraid of owning her faults to her, to ask her advice and assistance ; ah heaven ! is that delicacy, justice, or gratitude ?

JUL. I pray you, Madam, be calm ; I think I hear her.

L. JEM. Yes 'tis she. How melancholy she looks !

JUL. The conversation of the Steward has not enlivened her.

SCENE II.

JULIET, LADY JEMIMA; The MARCHI-
ONESS, [in a morning dress.]

MAR. Juliet—Ah dear Aunt, are you here! I was enquiring for you—Why did you not let me know you were come?

L. JEM. I was told you were busy.

MAR. Ought I not to leave every business to come to you?—[She kisses her hand. Lady Jemima looks at her a moment in silence.] You are looking at my head-dress; you think it ridiculously high, perhaps—

L. JEM. No, I was not thinking of that. What signifies how you are dressed? But I am sorry to observe you are astonishingly thin and changed.

MAR. Yes indeed, I am thinner than I was.

L. JEM. You sit up late, I'll engage.

MAR. It must be so if one lives in the world.

L. JEM. I have likewise lived in the world; it is not very long since; and yet I never sat up late.

MAR. The balls however—

L. JEM. And—do you never sit up late but at a ball?

JUL. A little likewise at Pharaoh; a little at the Viscountess Dormer's evening parties.—But for all this, my Lady is almost always in bed by five in the morning.

MAR. Another time, Juliet, you will answer when you are asked, and I pray you let it be with less exaggeration. Be gone.

[Juliet goes out.]

L. JEM. You behave very ill to her.

MAR. What ! when she endeavours to slander me in your presence ?

L. JEM. Well, what signifies it to you ? Are not you certain that I shall believe you in preference of every one ? Tell me positively, you neither make a practice of playing nor sitting up late, and notwithstanding, the good opinion I have of Juliet, I shall be convinced that she has not spoken the truth : tho' I look upon her as much superior to her condition, yet I cannot hesitate one moment between your declaration and that of your maid. You don't answer.

MAR. [after a short silence.] Dear Aunt, Juliet has said nothing but the truth.

L. JEM. And if it had not been for this explanation, you would have made me believe that she slandered you.

MAR. I was wrong, but you see at least that I was willing to repair my offence without equivocation. I yielded to the first emotion of impatience which that desire of informing you of things she was certain you would blame, could not fail to inspire.

L. JEM. Since you commit these faults without scruple while you know that they must displease me, why be afraid of my being informed ? Are not you your own mistress ? I have no power

over you but what your friendship pleases to give me, and when that is refused, I shall no longer either reproach you for your faults, or offer you my advice.

MAR. Ah! do not talk so, you pierce me to the heart. Can you suspect me of forgetting what I owe to you, and of not having all that respect, and attachment to you which could be due from the most affectionate daughter. How many times have I lamented the long absence which has separated me from you. Ah! would to heaven you had never left me; no, my dear Aunt, my heart is still the same, there your rights shall ever remain sacred, and you may be assured that nothing but the dread of afflicting you can ever set bounds to my confidence.

L. JEM. [embracing her.] Alas! can there be any thing so distressing to me as to see you wanting on that head?—Come then, and let me see clearly into that heart which is naturally so sincere and tender, and which perhaps is as yet but half disclosed.

MAR. [confused.] What do you require?—I have no secrets.—It is true that for some time I have given myself up to a kind of life too fatiguing for me, but, I shall renounce it without reluctance, and am convinced that employment and solitude are better suited to my disposition than all this idle dissipation.

L. JEM. Solitude is neither proper for your time of life, nor your rank. Cannot you renounce the faults of excessive dissipation without becoming unsociable? My dear child, that

would be only changing the folly. You should live in the world, enjoy the innocent pleasures that are to be found in it, give seven hours of the day to society, but employ the remainder in cultivating your talents and your understanding. That is all I have required of you, and you promised it. It was likewise agreed that you should not play at chance games.

MAR. All that is very true; but I have always played such moderate play——

L. JEM. Games of hazard are always expensive and dangerous, especially when they continue till five in the morning: besides, 'tis they that procure a woman the reputation of being fond of play, and I have so often mentioned to you the dreadful inconveniencies of such a reputation!

MAR. You left me, and I went astray; you are again returned, and I have recovered my guide; depend upon it, I will correct myself.

L. JEM. I see, at least, that your heart is not changed——all may be recovered, I am sure of it——How are you engaged for this evening?

MAR. I have no engagement, I expect some company this morning, but I shall be at liberty in the evening.

L. JEM. Will you let me sup with you?

MAR. Will I!—Is there any thing I can prefer to the happiness of being with you? I shall be alone.

L. JEM. May I depend upon it ?

MAR. Most undoubtedly ; there can be no third person that I should not think an intruder.

L. JEM. You still love me then ?

MAR. As I do my life, and I am more sensible of it at this instant than ever.

L. JEM. You have it in your power easily to prove it to me.

MAR. Ah, how ?

L. JEM. By placing an entire confidence in me—but we shall converse in the evening. Promise me however to answer, without evasion, all the questions I shall put to you.

MAR. Alas ! I may wish you to remain ignorant of my faults ; but to lie, especially to you, no, my dear aunt, you need not fear it.

L. JEM. That is enough, I am perfectly satisfied and content—but you must finish your dressing.—Farewell, my dear ; in the evening we shall resume this conversation.

[She embraces her.

MAR. How happy your goodness makes me !

JULIET entering.

JUL. My lady, here is a card ; the servant waits for an answer.

L. JEM. Farewell, my child ; I leave you till the evening.

[The Marchioness attends Lady Jemima to the end of the saloon, where they embrace.]

JUL. [looking at them] My lady seems much affected. ——— I would fain think she has declared all. Ah ! I wish to heaven it may be so !

SCENE IV.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

MAR. [returning] Come, and embrace me, my dear Juliet, and let me apologize for the manner in which I spoke to you a little ago.

JUL. [kisses her hand which she holds out to her ; the Marchioness embraces her.] Apologies ! ———

MAR. Yes, the expression is not too strong. Have you not been the companion of my infancy ? Are you not the friend chosen for me by my aunt ? — Educated with me, educated by her, how many are the titles you have to my affection ! — Ah, Juliet ! that I had but profited, as you have done, by the education I received ——— Alas ! I never was so sensible of my faults as I have been this day.

JUL. Ah, madam, how your tenderness affects me ! ——— I foresaw that this salutary conversation would restore you entirely to yourself.

MAR. My aunt ! ——— O how I love her ! what mind can be compared to hers ! such a fund of good sense ! such a sweet temper ! such charming indulgent tenderness ! —

Enter a VALET, bringing a note.

VAL. From Lady St. Far, my lady ; an answer is expected.

MAR. That is enough. [She reads. The Valet goes out.] How troublesome ! — But I must send an answer — What have I done with the first I received ? — Ay, here it is — Juliet, I will write while you do my hair ; but, put some flowers in my head — make haste —

[She sits down to her toilet, and takes the ink-stand.]

JUL. [aside] I'll wager these confounded notes will deface all her good intentions. [Juliet takes some flowers out of a band-box.] Madam, do you choose this garland of roses ?

MAR. What you please, it is quite the same to me. [Juliet begins to dress her hair.] The Marchioness searching on the toilet.] Where is my seal ? [She observes the biscuit figure.] Ah ! Juliet. —

JUL. What is the matter, madam ; have I hurt you ?

MAR. O ! no. Look at that pretty thing.

JUL. O, is that all ! — 'Tis a trifle from Lady Dormer ; there should be a card with it. [She searches with the point of the comb.] O, here it is.

MAR. Why did you not tell me of this ?

[She reads the card.]

JUL. I forgot it. I am stupified with all

these emblems of friendship, and altars of friendship, and cyphers! ———

MAR. Her card is charming, and this attention is truly agreeable.

JUL. [aside] Yes, quite so.

MAR. You will allow, Juliet, that this figure is delightful; it has such expression! ———

JUL. For my part, I see nothing in it but a long stupid countenance; it looks so insipid, it is enough to give one the vapours

[She yawns.

MAR. [drily] You are hard to please. For my part, I think it is charming.

JUL. That is enough.

MAR. [looking at herself in the glass] How you have dressed my hair——'tis frightful—— Give me another branch of roses—and then seal my letters and carry them.

[Juliet seals them with wafers, and the Marchioness puts her hair to rights.]

A SERVANT on entering.

From the Countess of Roseville, my Lady—
[He delivers a card, which the Marchioness reads.]

JUL. What, a third!

SER. Lady Sophia and Mrs. Tourville have sent to ask how your Ladyship does.

MAR. Very well. This card requires no answer. Juliet, give him those you just now sealed. [The servant going. The Marchi-

onefs to the fervant.] Harke'e, you muft go and enquire how Mrs. Dorfet is.

JUL. Is ſhe ſick ?

MAR. O ! no, but ſhe had a little head-ach yeſterday at the opera.——[To the ſervant.] And then to Mrs. Garman,——do you hear ?

SER. Yes, madam.

[He goes out.

MAR. [ſtill doing her hair.] A pin——do up this curl again. [She looks at herſelf in the glaſs.] 'Tis true, I find myſelf greatly changed.——

JUL. From the life you lead it is not extraordinary ; and if you continue it two years more, you will be no longer handſome.

MAR. I don't care much about it ; and muſt it not come to that at laſt ?

JUL. Yes ; but in growing old before the time, health is ruined, and that is a ſerious miſfortune. Beſides, madam, if you are ſo indifferent about your figure, why dedicate ſo much time to your toilet which might be much better employed ?

MAR. You are right, and the more ſo, as the toilet fatigues and tirés me exceſſively.

A VALET enters.

VAL. Mademoiſelle Cartoon deſires to know if your Ladyſhip will admit her ?

JUL. Ay, here come the milliners.

MAR. Send her away, I don't want any thing.

VAL. She says, she only begs the honour of seeing your Ladyship, and shewing you some new fashions. Besides, she comes by desire of the Viscountess Dormer.

MAR. O, that is another affair. Well, tell her to come in; but let her know beforehand, that I will not buy any thing. [Goes out.]

JUL. [aside] O yes, a charming resolution!

MAR. I must get rid of her——

JUL. Here she comes with her whole shop.

SCENE V.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET, MADEMOISELLE CARTOON.

A SHOP GIRL, carrying several boxes.

MAR. [rising from her toilet.] Good day, Mademoiselle Cartoon; you will be much dissatisfied with me, for I am determined not to buy any thing.

M. CAR. My God! Madam, I am not led by interest; but I know nobody that has so good a taste as your Ladyship, and I was only desirous to shew you that I am not quite unworthy of your Ladyship's protection.

MAR. The Viscountess Dormer has frequently mentioned you to me.

M. CAR. I have been greatly obliged to her—then there is such pleasure in working for her; her figure would set off the most indifferent work. [While she speaks she exposes

different millinery.] For my part, my Lady, I have a whim which must prevent my making my fortune ; it is, that I have no talent to work but for handsome people, and I have never solicited the custom of the ugly.

JUL. [aside] She understands her business.

MAR. [examining all the millinery.] Hah ! there is a droll cap.

M. CAR. I invented it, and made it this night. I have called it the Wag ; it would fit your Ladyship very well.

MAR. You are very agreeable, Mademoiselle Cartoon—Juliet, come and see the Wag. Truly it is pretty.

JUL. O fy, Madam, it is hideous !

MAR. [placing it upon her head, and looking in the glass.] What a figure ! —See Mademoiselle Cartoon, how like a fool I look with your Wag.

M. CAR. Ah, my Lady, I wish I could see your picture in that cap. Truly it fits you so well that I shall be quire inconsolable if you don't take it. It is not certainly for the importance of the cap, because Mrs. Lancy wanted to purchase it this very morning.—

MAR. Mrs. Lancy—She is rather a little oldish to pretend still to waggery.

M. CAR. For which reason I could not consent to sell it to her. It will suit nobody but your Ladyship—The Lady Viscountess Dormer is very handsome, but she has not the vivacity, nor the spirited look of your Ladyship,

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and that cap would not by any means become her so well.

MAR. What is the price of it ?

M. CAR. Your Ladyship will please to observe, that the blond is such as I never saw, and that there is a great deal of work, yet for all that the price is only six guineas.

MAR. I should indeed have guessed it higher.

JUL. [aside] Why truly, a yard of blonde, and half a yard of gauze, for six guineas, is a cheap purchase. —

MAR. Ha ! I hear Lady Dormer's voice. —

JUL. So, so ; then all the millinery will remain here.

MAR. Ay, 'tis she.

[She runs out to meet her.]

SCENE VI.

JULIET, MADEMOISELLE CARTOON.

JUL. [aside] Would not any one say they were going to meet after a year's absence, yet they parted only at four o'clock this morning. It is overdoing the matter — But 'tis the fashion.

M. CAR. [aside] I see that I must gain this girl's good-will. [Aloud.] I am told, ma'am, you have a great regard for Mrs. Gerard, who commonly serves the Marchioness. I believe, if

I was known to you, you would not be sorry to see me here.

JUL. Mademoiselle, you are misinformed, for so far from having a regard for Mrs. Gerard, I cannot endure her.

M. CAR. I am delighted with your speaking so openly ; I would not injure any person in the world, but since you know Mrs. Gerard, I may freely tell you, that I don't think she deserves the confidence of worthy people. She does not understand her business better than others ; and, besides, she is so greedy and avaricious——But, for my part, I know how to be grateful for favours conferred upon me.

JUL. [aside] O, I see what she would be at——this is nothing new to me.

M. CAR. I should be very happy, ma'am, if there is any thing in my shop that you could like——This half negligée for instance——

JUL. It is greatly to my taste, but you have a short cloak there which I like prodigiously.

M. CAR. [aside] She comes to the point at once without ceremony. [Aloud] In short, the lace is superb, but it is very much at your service as well as the cap.

JUL. O! it is too dear for me.

M. CAR. You are in jest sure. I pray you, ma'am, to give me leave to present you with these two trifles. I only beg your friendship.

JUL. And my lady's custom.

M. CAR. [Laughing] That comes of course.

JUL. Keep your trumpery, Mademoiselle

CARTOON : you judge of me from other ladies maids whom you have known, but for my part, I shall not be so unjust as to confound every milliner with you. Another time I advise you to be a little more circumspect, and remember that noble and honourable sentiments may be found in every condition in life.

M. CAR. [aside] What a four fantastical humour !

JUL. But here comes my lady.

SCENE VII.

JULIET, MADEMOISELLE CARTOON,
the MARCHIONESS, the VISCOUNTESS.

[The Marchioness and Viscountess enter, holding each other by the arm.*]

VIS. [to the Marchioness] My heart, what a value you put upon such a moderate attention ! [She embraces her.

MAR. O it is charming ! There it is still upon my toilet, for I have but this instant discovered it—— Juliet, take it and carry it into my closet.——

* In this scene, the two friends affect great sensibility by their voice and manner, and frequently embracing each other.

JUL. What shall I cary, madam ?

MAR. That figure in biscuit, but take care you don't break it.

JUL. [aside] The loss to be sure would be very great. —

[She takes the figure and goes out.

VIS. Now let us employ ourselves a little with Mademoiselle Cartoon. [To the Marchioness.] My heart ! is she not very agreeable — Mademoiselle Cartoon, have you any puffs ?

M. CAR. Yes, madam, there is one quite new.

VIS. 'Tis monstrously ugly — Shew me something else ; bring here that large band-box. [To the Marchioness.] Let us sit down. [They sit.

MAR. Come, give it us upon our knees — there, very well.

[The Marchioness and Viscountess take different goods out of the box.]

VIS. There is a pretty hat enough — but it is common. Mademoiselle Cartoon, I must have some conversation with you about hats ; I will give you some ideas —

M. CAR. Your Ladyship has such fancy !

MAR. Mademoiselle Cartoon, here, lay all this aside for me.

VIS. Ah ! my heart, take this cap too ; here is the fellow of it, which I intend to keep.

MAR. Come, with all my heart.

VIS. Except the two hats I will take all that remains in the box. Mademoiselle Cartoon,

order somebody to put them in my carriage.

[She takes the box.]

SCENE VIII.

JULIET, MADEMOISELLE CARTOON,
MARCHIONESS, VISCOUNTESS.

JUL. [to the Viscountess] Your servant desires to know at what o'clock your Ladyship chooses to have your carriage.

VIS. Let them stay, I am just going. [To the Marchioness.] Now we talk of carriages, I have something charming to tell you. Yesterday the Baroness was invited to a wedding dinner, where there was a Pharaoh party. She came at two o'clock, and on entering the saloon, very coolly gave orders for her carriage to come next day at mid-day.

MAR. That was very droll! ———

VIS. But what is not so droll, the unlucky woman lost two thousand guineas, though she has but two hundred and fifty pounds allowance, and she does not know where to put her head. You must not mention this adventure, we promised her to keep it secret.

JUL. [aside] And it is finely kept!

VIS. If it was known, she would be irrecoverably embroiled with her family.

MAR. That is dreadful

[The Marchioness and Viscountess whisper.]

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M. CAR. [aside] I am glad to hear this, I must take the advantage of the information. Your Ladyships have no farther commands.

MAR. Farewell, Mademoiselle Cartoon.— Juliet, tell that I am not at home to any one ——— Do you hear ?

JUL. Yes, madam.

[She goes out with Mademoiselle Cartoon, who carries off her boxes.]

SCENE IX.

MARCHIONESS, VISCOUNTESS,

MAR. I hope, my dear friend, you will dine with me ?

VIS. Am I not engaged to a reading party, and a tea drinking — O ! I have forgot my knotting bag ; how giddy I am ! I shall be tired to death — I cannot attend to the person who reads unless I am knotting.

MAR. What is the work that is to be read ?

VIS. It is a poem.

MAR. Of Sir George Herbert's, I'll engage.

VIS. Just so. He had some inclination to have it printed ; but you know Sir George, he is so modest and unaffected ! ——— The name of author terrifies him : as he says himself, he only writes for the amusement of his friends.

MAR. However, I heard him read his poem a few days ago in the presence of sixty people.

VIS. To-day we shall have more than a hun-

dred ; but it is because he is so much in the world ; he has a great many friends. — I am so provoked that you won't go to this reading ; my heart, don't you know that we shall scarcely meet again this whole day ?

MAR. But tell me, why are you in such full dress this morning ?

VIS. O my dear, that is because I shan't return home all the day. At six o'clock I go to the play, from thence I shall return to take you up, and we will go to see the new dance ; we will make two or three visits, and then sup at the ambassador's. We shall play at Pharaoh ; — I am ruined, but it is no matter ; my passion for play is as constant as it is unfortunate. I shall have done by leaving off play and the world at the same time ; all this distracts me ; seriously I am not well but when with you, or quite alone ; I warn you beforehand, I shall become a misanthrope ; if you knew all the plagues that I am tormented with — and then I am affected with mere nothings. They are greatly to be pitied who have much sensibility ; it is a gift of heaven which occasions great unhappiness. — My heart, have you any rouge there ? mine is a little too pale.

MAR. There is some. [The Viscountess places herself at the toilet, and puts on rouge.] I assure you, you look very beautiful this morning, and dressed most elegantly. If Mrs. Seymour sees you to-day, you will make her die with envy.

VIS. What a horrid thing is envy ! how it disfigures those who are subject to it !

MAR. O that is true. — My heart, have you thought of our drefs for the quadrille ?

VIS. Yes, my dear. I believe, not to conceal any thing from you, that our quadrille will make a little noise. — We have still six repetitions to make, have we not ?

MAR. Certainly.

VIS. What think you of Mrs. Belmont, who disappointed us last time, to go and consult her lawyers ?

MAR. But the law-suit, I hear, is of very great importance ; her fortune depends on the decision.

VIS. With all my heart, but she might very well have put off her counsel till another day. Mrs Belmont shews her rusticity on all occasions ; she has lived much in the country.

MAR. Her friends say she has a great deal of merit.

VIS. That may be, but it is a merit that is not very brilliant. Have you observed how the strings of her hoop are always falling ; she is excessively awkward. — I do not know how she came to be of our quadrille ; she will disfigure it. —

MAR. She does not dance amiss, and she is handsome.

VIS. Handsome indeed ! you are very good : she might have been, but she is no longer young ; she is at least twenty-seven, tho' she gives herself out to be only twenty-four. — But, my dear friend, I must leave you.

MAR. What, already?

VIS. We shall meet again in the evening. I have a thousand things to tell you; I want to open my heart to my friend; I assure you I have more than one cause of vexation, and if I had not so much courage——

MAR. You alarm me.

VIS. I will tell you all at the opera. By the by, my heart, shall we take that small box; are you resolved?

MAR. If it is agreeable to you.

VIS. I shall be delighted with it. It will be an additional means of being with you.

MAR. Well, I agree to it.

VIS. Adieu, my puffs. [She embraces her.] This short conversation has done me good; I was so gloomy when I came to you.—Farewell, my dear friend——Have you seen my new carriage?

MAR. No, my heart. Is it below?

VIS. Yes. Come and see it, it is delightful.

MAR. Come, with all my heart.

[They take each other by the arm, and go out.]

End of the First Act.

A C T II.

SCENE FIRST.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

MARCHIONESS.

JULIET, get my green embroidered gown ; I shall dress presently.

JUL. What, madam, to sup with your aunt by yourselves !

MAR. My God ! I have been engaged these eight days to sup this evening at the ambassador's, and the Viscountess is to come and take me up.

JUL. But, madam, you have given your word to Lady Jemima to wait for her this evening ; and truly you might give up a supper, where there are to be a hundred people, and from which you might be disengaged by the slightest excuse.

MAR. Yes, but the Viscountess will never forgive me.

JUL. Madam, your aunt will have much more reason to be offended with you.

MAR. I am afraid so, for I am persuaded she will think my reason a very bad one.

JUL. Detestable, you may depend upon it,

MAR. That is is exceeding perplexing—— certainly I shall be excessively grieved to displease my Aunt, and there is nothing I can dread so much. But, Juliet, I must own to you that this tete-a-tete, for which I expressed so great a desire in the morning, troubles and vexes me at present——

JUL. Is it possible?

MAR. Alas! this change does not proceed from my heart—— at all other times I would sacrifice every pleasure in the world to the happiness of passing the evening alone with my aunt. Yes, Juliet, it is true, all she says is the language of prudence and reason, and it was my greatest pleasure to hear her when I followed her advice. At present she never fails to persuade me, but at the same time her discourse occasions a secret confusion and regret, the bitterness of which I cannot describe. Alas! there is no doubt one must never have erred to enjoy all the delights of virtuous instruction.

JUL. It is true that formerly in particularising to you all the female duties, it was presenting a faithful picture of your own life.

MAR. Ah Juliet! and I have been capable of neglecting and losing such happiness!——

JUL. You will recover it again, and experience will add one virtue more, a distrust of yourself. [A Servant enters.]

MAR. What do you want?

SER. A Painter has brought three pictures for your Ladyship.

MAR. I know what they are. Go and put them into my cabinet with the rest.

[The Servant goes out.]

JUL. Nine and three, make twelve—people commonly have only the pictures of their intimate friends; so, my Lady, you have twelve intimate friend; I congratulate you.

MAR. No, I have no intimate friend but Lady Dormer, the rest are only acquaintances.

JUL. Yet I observe you pay the same attention to all these ladies; you are almost equally solicitous about each of them; they are upon your particular list; you load them with caresses; upon the least absence you write to them; when you meet them, you have always some secret to whisper; if one of them is sick, you seem to feel the greatest anxiety, and you run to shut yourself up with her. If this is not friendship, by what name can you call such demonstrations? Ah! my dear mistress, allow me to tell you, your heart and understanding should preserve you from following this ridiculous custom, and make you despise such vain and childish affectation. I beg pardon for the zeal with which I am transported; but my duty is to tell you the truth, I think you are worthy of such an effort.

MAR. You are not mistaken, Juliet; I at least know how to value your advice and friendship; and you may be at the same time persuaded, that there are occasions when I am as much shocked as you can be, at the ridiculous follies you have been describing. I am dissatisfied with the life I lead; but it has unfortu-

nately made me contract a habit of indolence and idleness; I have lost all relish for employment; I have neglected to cultivate those talents which formerly used to procure me so much praise, and am terrified at the thoughts of application, and the time necessary to bring me back to where I was. That is really the obstruction, I own to you.

JUL. Truly, my Lady, if you continue to hesitate, your resolutions to give application may come too late: but do you sincerely think that being remiss for eighteen months, can make you lose the fruit of fifteen years assiduity and application? In short, Madam, if you are so fond of your present life of dissipation, if you find nothing comparable to the happiness of paying visits, going to public places, and playing at Pharaoh, I should imagine it will not be without difficulty, your reason can make such a sacrifice; but company fatigues and distresses you. —

MAR. That is frequently true — but however, Juliet, though I have naturally the greatest contempt and aversion to coquetry, I am not always insensible to the desire of pleasing.

JUL. O, I understand you very well. You are not unwilling to shew you self, and to observe that you are admired; is not that it?

MAR. Yes; but it is such a transitory pleasure, and so spiritless! ———

JUL. It must be so, for you share the triumph with so many others, that however small may be your vanity, you cannot be contented with

that. I must tell you what I heard on that subject the other day; it was at the grand entertainment given by the Ambassador; you was there with the Viscountess Dormer, and both of you fixed the attention of numbers of people; I was in the crowd, and heard the observations that were made on both of you, and I cannot conceal from you, that they were almost all to the advantage of the Viscountess. They compared you with each other; and the splendor, the excellent form, the fine figure of your friend was universally preferred. I was provoked; for really, Madam, I think you are much handsomer. But I was still more enraged, when all of a sudden, just by this group of men whose conversation I had overheard, who should happen to pass, but that new-married lady, who is always so dressed, so plain a woman, and who makes so many grimaces; I can't recollect her name ———

MAR. O, Mrs. Elvington ———

JUL. The same. Well then, Mrs. Elvington, after a thousand affected airs, every one more disagreeable than the other, and all those twistings of the head which you know, quitted these gentlemen, and followed her mother-in-law into another apartment. She left the group in such admiration of her charms that nothing was to be heard but her praises. They extolled her manner, her countenance, and unanimously agreed that she was a thousand times more agreeable, more captivating (pardon

my sincerity) than you, Madam, or even the Viscountess Dormer, whom they had found so charming but a moment before.

MAR. But 'tis incredible; Mrs. Elvington is downright ugly.

JUL. I think so too, but the report I have just now made is not the less faithful; I was with the Ambassador's Steward, who was likewise much diverted with this conversation.

MAR. I'll engage your group was composed of the worst company——

JUL. But they were men whom I have often seen in company with your Ladyship! for instance, the Viscount Elford, and his brother, Mr. Royal, Sir George Herbert, and five or six more.

MAR. Sir George Herbert one of them?—

JUL. My God! yes; and he was one of the most vehement in the praise of Lady Dormer, and then of Mrs. Elvington, notwithstanding all the insipid things he says to you sometimes at your toilet; but, Madam, that is the way with all men; and therefore it is a misfortune to set a high value on beauty. However handsome one can be, it is possible she may be outdone by another; and what is still more provoking, yet very common, is, to see the most indifferent figure preferred: so that the hope of universal success in this kind is a chimaera; caprice, without reason, bestows it one day, and takes it away the next. But the triumph which does not depend upon whim or fashion, and which at all times and all ages

may truly gratify vanity, is that of gaining admiration by a happy temper and good conduct, pleasing by agreeable manners, by superior understanding, and by the charms of accomplishments.

MAR. Come, Juliet, I am determined to resume my studies and recover the habit of application; I will begin to-morrow. Get my harp and forte-piano put in tune; prepare my casel and my colours; place all the books of history in my library, which were given me by my Aunt, and burn all my romances.

JUL. 'Tis an excellent resolution, provided it holds.

MAR. It shall hold, depend upon it. — What is the matter now?

SER. [enters.] The poor woman who was here yesterday, from your estate in the country, begs to speak with your Ladyship.

MAR. Tell her to wait. [The Servant goes out.]

JUL. Certainly it is the woman whose house was burnt.

MAR. My God, yes! — She has great need of help, and I am so unfortunate as not to have it in my power at present.

JUL. Goodness of heart without prudent œconomy can only occasion vain regret: your Ladyship experiences it at this moment; it is not possible to be at the same time both lavish and generous.

MAR. Now I think of it, I will play this evening at Pharaoh, and if I win, I shall have

the pleasure of extricating this poor woman from her present condition.

JUL. And if you lose?

MAR. O, I shall win, I am sure of it; my intention will bring me good luck.

JUL. By relieving this poor woman, you will do an action pleasing to yourself; but not a worthy action.

MAR. How so?

JUL. Have you no Creditors? Is it possible to be truly generous without being just? Is the noble pleasure of bestowing, to be indulged by those who do not know how to pay their debts? —

MAR. Ah Juliet! you are certainly right, and you have made me severely sensible of the horror of my situation. Alas! I can only offer to the unhappy, a compassion, fruitless for them, and galling for myself! So that I must debar myself from pity; I must keep at a distance, or at least not yield to that feeling, however it may be implanted in my nature; what would be a virtue in another, in me would only be a weakness. I have debts, they must be discharged; that is my first duty, I know it, I am sensible of it; but let what will be the consequence, this woman must be assisted. Juliet, get positive information what her situation is. — Some one comes; how vexed I am that I did not give orders to exclude every body.

JUL. It is Lady Dormer.

MAR. Every thing distresses me at present.

[Juliet goes out.]

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SCENE II.

The VISCOUNTESS, The MARCHIONESS.

VIS. How is this, my heart? not yet dressed! what laziness!

MAR. I have a dreadful head-ach.

VIS. You must go out, that will cure you—Pharaoh will carry it off, I am sure.

MAR. Truly it is impossible for me to dress and sup abroad in the evening.

VIS. And what will the Ambassador say?

MAR. My heart, you will be so good as to make an apology; won't you?

VIS. But I am very much inclined to break my engagement likewise, and the rather, as I am not at all well to day. — My nerves are in bad order——then my head is so horridly dressed. — Come, I will keep you company; we will chat the evening and go to bed be-times, that will do much better.

MAR. I am exceedingly vexed that I cannot ask you to sup, because as I am to remain at home, my aunt certainly comes to spend the evening here.

VIS. This is quite a new way of proceeding; I only engaged to sup at the Ambassador's for the pleasure of your company; you next decline to go, I consent; but you must be so

good as to admit me as a third person in the party with you and your Aunt ; I think that is but just.

MAR. But you will be tired to death.

VIS. It is true that your Aunt will not enliven me greatly ; she is certainly a most respectable character, but I own to you she has an air of severity which strikes me with awe. — I'll engage she don't like me.

MAR. What an idea !

VIS. I am sure of it : all aunts and mothers-in-law conceive an aversion to me at first sight. But hear me ; an excellent thought has just come into my head ; we must absolutely spend the evening together, because, all joking aside, I have something of the utmost importance to communicate to you. I'll tell you what I have thought of, that you should write to your Aunt to let her know that I am sick, and have begged the favour of you to come and sup with me.

MAR. O ! I beg you will excuse me for not employing this deceit ? I am resolved never to make use of any with a person to whom I owe so much gratitude and affection.

VIS. That is very well expressed ; but it is not common sense : there is no deceit in the matter, for I swear to you that I am very ill, and I request you to sup with me ; so that you will tell nothing but the truth.

MAR. What folly ! — But you are not ill ?

VIS. Did not I tell you just now that I found myself nervous — Besides, all that tea which I drank this morning has given me a pain at

my heart.——In short, to set your conscience at rest, I promise you to take nothing this night but orange-flower water. Are you satisfied, or have you still some remaining scruples?——You laugh; come, I take that smile for consent. My heart, I conjure you to give me this proof of your friendship. [She embraces her.] I shall be very sensible of it.——I want to ask your advice: I want to entrust you with all my difficulties.——You will instruct me what to do; you will comfort me, and I cannot delay this conversation, for my situation is very urgent; I must decide, and your opinion only can determine me.

MAR. There is no resisting you. Well, I will write to my Aunt: the telling this lie is much against the grain with me, I cannot deny it.

VIS. Well, she shall never know it.

MAR. That is impossible, for I am sure I shall confess it to her to-morrow.

VIS. That would be foolish indeed——Where is your writing desk?——

MAR. Here it is.

VIS. Come, my heart, write away. [The Marchioness sits down and writes, and the Viscountess looks at herself in the glass and adjusts her dress.] How my head is tumbled!——I must have the seat of my carriage placed still lower.——My heart, do you like the colour of this gown?—I think it is not lively—besides, it is but indifferently trimmed—however, it was made by Mademoiselle Cartoon: O! my God;

now I speak of Cartoon, how could I forget to tell you of a thing which really grieves me to the soul.

MAR. What is it?

VIS. You know my sensibility, and I leave you to judge what I must feel. You remember what I told you this morning of the Baroness in presence of Mademoiselle Cartoon.

MAR. Yes, of her having lost two thousand guineas at Pharaoh.

VIS. Well, the poor Baroness owes Mademoiselle Cartoon a good deal of money. Mademoiselle Cartoon, from what escaped me in the morning, being afraid of not getting payment, went to the Baroness's relations, and acquainted them with the whole affair.

MAR. That was terrible.

VIS. To compleat the misfortune, the Baroness has a mother in law who plays only at loto, and a father-in law who plays at nothing but chefs, so that her fault appears to be an unpardonable offence. The family have held a council upon it; they have talked of her absenting herself for a couple of years; of setting out for her old house in the country, and spending two Summers there; — and of some other horrid schemes which I shall not mention, for it makes, one shudder to think of them. In the mean time, the Baroness, in despair, wrote to me, and acquainted me with this cruel history.

MAR. And did she know that you were the cause of her misfortune?

VIS. Yes, truly ! Mademoiselle Cartoon had told it ; so that the letter pierced me to the soul. I instantly went to the Baronefs to prevail with her to deny it to her family, because I undertook to find money for her occasions ; but she had made a compleat confession, so that we could not execute that scheme. Then I went to her mother-in-law ; I took the fault entirely upon myself ; I told her I had dragged the Baronefs along with me against her inclination, and that I alone was the cause of her guilt ; In short I spoke with such eloquence that I obtained her pardon. It is true that the Baronefs is not to be permitted to see me again ; that is one of the articles of accommodation ; but I submit to it without reluctance since it secures her peace.

MAR. A very disagreeable adventure truly !

VIS. I am the more to blame for having mentioned it in presence of Mademoiselle Cartoon, as I knew she was acquainted with the Baronefs, for I had seen her at her house twenty times ; but my head is always so occupied, so filled with business ———— And that makes me so confused ————

MAR. My heart, I suppose that after such an accident, you will give up Mademoiselle Cartoon.

VIS. O ! I am quite mad with her. To be sure she exposed me in a shocking manner ; but we we must be just ; there is none but she that can make puffs, and trim a gown.

MAR. Who is coming to interrupt us ?

VIS. It is Juliet.

SCENE III.

VISCOUNTESS, MARCHIONESS,
JULIET.

JUL. I come to acquaint your Ladyship, that Lady *Jemima* is this instant arrived, and is with your mother-in-law; undoubtedly she will be here in a moment to see you; what must I say to her?

MAR. In that case, the note which I had begun is useless. You see, my heart, we must renounce our project, for certainly I will not order my door to be shut against her.

VIS. But why renounce our project? Cannot you say to her what you intended to write?

MAR. To tell a lie in speaking is much more difficult.

VIS. Such cowardice! when one is determined to do it, what signifies the matter? I can discover that you have more weakness than scruples of conscience. Come, come, shew yourself, you have too much spirit to be so irresolute.

MAR. But my Aunt has seen your carriage; how can I tell her you are sick.

VIS. Go down to your mother-in-law and tell her I sent my carriage that I might see you the sooner; nothing can be more simple. In the mean time, I will remain here till she goes.

JUL. [aside.] That is what is called genius and invention.

VIS. Come, my dear friend, don't lose time.

MAR. Truly on this occasion I give you a strong proof of friendship.

VIS. Think only how happy we shall be this evening; to be able to speak with perfect freedom, and sure of not being interrupted;—but make haste; come, go down——

MAR. My heart, how you abuse my attachment to you!——Farewell then; for I find I must always conclude by doing whatever you please. [She goes out.]

SCENE IV.

VISCOUNTESS, JULIET.

JUL. [aside.] How it vexes me! [Aloud to the Viscountess.] Does your Ladyship want any thing?

VIS. Your company only Mrs. Juliet; I wish you would not go away.

JUL. Your Ladyship does me a great deal of honour.

VIS. You love your mistress very much; that has great merit in my eyes.—You were bred up with her?

JUL. Yes, Madam, I owe all to the goodness of Lady Jemima.

VIS. Lady Jemima is a most valuable person—you do honour to her cares.—You were an orphan, I believe?

JUL. No, Madam, I am so happy as to have a father and mother whom I love, and who, by their virtues, merit all my affection; the education (so much superior to my condition) which I have received, so far from placing them at a greater distance from me, only shews me better the extent of my duty in that respect, and renders such agreeable ties, as dear as they are respectable and sacred.

VIS. How good, what an excellent disposition — It is very droll, she has brought tears in my eyes. Now I sincerely love Lady Jemima, who has taught you such excellent principles.

JUL. They depend upon the natural feelings, and are impressed on every heart; a bad education debases them, while a good one serves only to unfold them.

VIS. I could hear her the whole day with pleasure. — Truly, Juliet, you surprize me — very much indeed. — I really feel a sincere friendship for her. — Juliet, I must embrace you.

JUL. My Lady —

VIS. She is charming! — Such a gentle, prudent manner — and so good a heart. — Her father and mother must be very happy. — Truly I cannot get the better of those tender emotions she has occasioned. — Tell me, Juliet; you passed near two years in the country with Lady Germain: You must have been a great comfort to her, for I imagine that such a retired life must be very melancholy.

JUL. My Lady was very happy there; she

found none but simple pleasures, but they are such as never tire.

VIS. I can conceive that — I likewise love the country——I naturally like rural pleasures—Rivulets, green banks, and flowers are delightful objects; but when all is frozen, what becomes of them in winter?

JUL. Music, drawing and reading employed one part of the day; and the evenings, my Lady, surrounded by her family, neither regretted the entertainments, balls, nor pleasures of Paris.

VIS. Nobody can be more amiable than Lady Germain, but she is not chearful.

JUL. She was at that time.

VIS. Yes, she had no care, no disquiet; her health was better.—She is greatly changed this last year, I am in pain for her—I have been told that her affairs are not in good order.—

JUL. You are misinformed, Madam; I am confident they are in the best state. My Lady is so reasonable in every respect!

VIS. I believe she is much indebted to your good counsels.

JUL. I never had an opportunity to offer her any; her conduct is perfect in every respect.

VIS. [with emphasis.] She certainly is a charming woman!—I have an affection for her—She has some inclination for me.—She inspires me with something so tender and affecting, that it may really be called a passion; and then there is such a conformity in our disposi-

tions, such a sympathy between us, that it is impossible but we should love one another to distraction.

JUL. [aside.] Ay, there is all the balderdash of exaggeration and sensibility.

VIS. But don't I hear a carriage going out of the court?

JUL. Probably Lady Jemima is going.

VIS. Go, I pray you, my dear Juliet, and enquire. —

JUL. Here comes my Lady.

VIS. The visit has not been long.

SCENE V.

VISCOUNTESS, MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

VIS. Well, how have you managed?

MAR. [in a melancholy voice.] Just as we agreed; I delivered the whole story as it was composed by you; my Aunt seemed to believe it from the first word; she asked me no questions, and immediately departed.

VIS. That is charming; we shall spend the evening delightfully. — I still have some business which must be finished; I must leave you at present, but I will be back, be-times. Adieu, my dear. — A-propos, do you know I love Juliet excessively; we have had a very serious conversation — I am delighted with her; I envy your happiness in having such an amiable person with

you.— See how she blushes— She is good, intelligent and modest ; she is not deficient in any one good quality.—

MAR. Notwithstanding what you have seen, you may be assured it will require more than one day to know, and put a true value on all her good qualities.

VIS. I very willingly believe whatever can be said to her advantage—But I must tear myself from hence.

MAR. Where are you going ?

VIS. I am going among the shops ; will you go with me ?

MAR. No, my head aches so, I can't go.

VIS. And I am quite worn out with the fatigues of the day— And then, what a day I am to have to-morrow — At mid-day our experiments on fixed air ; at one o'clock the horse-race—from thence to the French Academy, to hear the discourse of admission ; and then to see the dogs dance ; and then to Versailles — I really cannot conceive, with my delicate and indifferent health, and the feeble state of my nerves, how I have strength to lead such a life.

MAR. It seems to be agreeable to you, since you have adopted it.

VIS. No—it is because I am excessively complaisant—for I am naturally indolent. Sir George Herbert, speaking of me, said, that I had no vivacity, except in my imagination, or energy, but in my character. It is perfectly true, and describes me exactly ; I love

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tranquility, calm, and recollection: what a delicious thing is repose! But who can follow their own inclinations?—[She looks at her watch,] My God! 'tis a quarter past six. Adieu, my dear Friend; I shall be here in an hour and a half at latest. [She embraces her, and moves some steps to go out.] O! I forgot—My dear life, who is it that makes your chamberlounes?

JUL. Mrs. Bertrand, my Lady.

VIS. Be so good, Juliet, as to send her to me—and when I come back presently, I will undress, and you shall lend me one.—Ah! there is no happiness in life without a chamberlounes.—Adieu, my little heart. [She embraces the Marchioness again, and then goes out.]

SCENE VI.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

JUL. [after a short silence, during which the Marchioness seems deep in thought.] You are pensive, my Lady; what a pity, your inattention has made you lose a fine encomium on chamberlounes, and a perfect definition of happiness.

MAR. [speaking to herself.] I am persuaded my Aunt must have observed that I was telling a lie; she could not fail to see it in my countenance—I am exceedingly vexed at it; how I am thwarted, afflicted and unfortunate!—Every

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thing unites to distress me to-day. Returning from my mother-in-law, I met that poor woman in the outer room; she threw herself at my feet with her children; she made me very unhappy. — I desired her to wait—Juliet, I absolutely must assist her.

JUL. But, my Lady, it requires five and twenty guineas; and if she cannot have that sum this evening, her husband will be dragged to prison to-morrow by day-break.

MAR. [untying her necklace.] Well, go and sell this heart of diamonds; it cost sixty guineas; you will easily get twenty. Go, and do not lose a moment.

JUL. But, Madam, I do not know a Jeweller—

MAR. (with impatience.) Give it, give it me, I will go myself—Order the horses to be put to—

JUL. Your coachman is not in the way: Your Ladyship said you would not go out: besides this is a holiday, and all the shops are shut.

MAR. [in a passion.] The true difficulty is your want of zeal—You do nothing but say severe things to me—to afflict me, to make me sensible how much I am to be pitied. Reasonings, peevishness, and rudeness, are what you call proofs of attachment.—I won't have any more lecturings; I will have no answers.—If it is not agreeable to you, I don't keep you, you are your own mistress.

JUL. No, I am not; your Aunt Lady Jemima

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placed me with you, and in return for all her favours, desired that I would remain. I must bear your anger, your injustice, and even your hatred, without having the resource of a common servant, that of quitting your service. I can indeed avoid coming into your presence till you send for me—but before I can leave your house, your Ladyship must give me a formal dismissal.

[She goes out.]

SCENE VII.

MARCHIONESS, [alone.]

[She drops into a chair : After a short silence.]

How severe those reproaches she has just now uttered—What ! insult a person who has consecrated her life to me—abuse her for her situation, for her attachment—Attachment ! May I flatter myself with the thought that I can inspire any ? Alas ! 'tis only that which she owes to my Aunt detains her with me—Did she not tell me so ? She loved me formerly for my own sake.—But how shall we preserve the affections of people about us, if we no longer preserve those virtues by which they were attached ?——What an oppressive reflection !—In short, I no longer have any one to whom I can communicate my distress. My Aunt ! I have despised her counsels ; I have betrayed her hopes—I may still have recourse to her pity ; but I would

owe nothing to her, but from her affection ; and I have deserved to lose it irrecoverably.— And she who has hitherto been a most amiable a most indulgent friend — what will she think at her return ? How can I stand her presence and her just reproaches ; and how can I support life without her esteem ?—Good heaven ! into what an abyss have I fallen ?—My true, my only friends withdraw from me ; I am forsaken ; and what have I remaining but frivolous connections that serve to lead me astray.— I feel as if I were alone in the world : every thing seems to come upon me at once, to oppress me and drive me to despair.

[She falls back upon her chair.

SCENE VIII.

MARCHIONESS, a VALET.

MAR. Some one comes—let me, if possible, conceal the dreadful disorder I am in at present.—[She rises.] What do you want ?

VAL. Here are some letters, my Lady, by the Penny Post.

MAR. [breaks them open and reads.] [Aside.] Here are three Creditors whom I had forgotten.—Complaints too, and threatenings.—What humiliations !—[To the Valet.] What stops you ?—Leave me.

VAL. My Lady—it is, that—

MAR. What ?

VAL. It is that—I wish your Ladyship would be so good as to pay me something in advance upon my accompts.

MAR. It is impossible at present.

VAL. As your Ladyship has just now given five and twenty guineas to the woman whose house was burnt, I imagined——

MAR. Who I!——I have not given her any thing; unhappily I cannot assist her.

VAL. Your Ladyship may say what you think proper; but the woman is only this instant gone; she informed me of your Ladyship's generosity, and shewed me the money.

MAR. How is this?—But it is not true.

VAL. She did say that your Ladyship desired it might not be known; but she entrusted the secret with Peter and I.

MAR. O heavens! what is this I perceive!—Call Juliet hither.

VAL. Yes, Madam—Here is my accompt; I intreat your Ladyship will cast an eye over it, and remember I have a wife and five children, and that I am their only resource.

MAR. I will attend to it I promise you; but go and find Juliet, and bid her come to me instantly; go. [The Valet goes out.] Juliet—yes, Juliet is capable of it.—Good God! and at the very instant that I behave to her with such injustice—Ah! how I long to repair my fault!—But she does not come, I must go to her—I believe I hear her—It is she.

SCENE IX.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

MAR. Juliet, you have assisted that poor woman in my name ; you have stript yourself of all you had, to save me from the grief and shame of abandoning her in her misfortunes.

JUL. My God, Madam, who told you so ?

MAR. [embracing her with transport.] I have discover'd you ; my heart at least is capable of knowing and valuing yours.

JUL. What I did is very simple ; I had the money, my father and mother could do without it ; I gave it as from you to the woman, but added, that it was your desire, she would not mention it to any one.

MAR. So, Juliet, you expected to conceal from me such a just cause of gratitude— Ah ! of what happiness did you attempt to deprive me ! —Tho' I must not ascribe such a generous affecting deed to your friendship for me ; tho' you have told me, Juliet, that the sole motive of all your actions is your attachment to my aunt ; I do not love you less—and I am not less sensible to the pleasure of admiring your virtues.

JUL. Ah, Madam, my zeal may be sometimes rash and indiscreet ; I am sensible of it, I own it ; but I flattered myself with the hope that the cause which produced it, was so well known to

you, that you would still deign to excuse it. No, Madam, I dare say when you seemed to doubt my heart, you were not sincere. No, I can never persuade myself that you are capable of such injustice.

MAR. [with the most affecting tenderness.] Juliet, my dear Juliet! — You still love me then?

JUL. Love you! — Ah, Madam, since you allow me to make use of the expression, I love you as one ought to love a benefactress, a sister, and the object of the chief affection of my soul. Think only, Madam, that we are but twenty-two years of age, and I have loved you fifteen. Every thing that affects you, becomes personal to me; your griefs are mine; I am proud of your success, or grieved at your faults, because all my happiness depends upon your conduct, and your reputation. Being destined from my infancy to consecrate my life to you, owing every thing to your family and to your goodness, can I, my Lady, have any other sentiments, without the most dreadful ingratitude?

MAR. [embracing her.] Ah! why am I not worthy of such a friend! — Forgive me my faults, my acts of injustice, I detest them. Ah! Juliet, disquiet and vexation have cruelly changed my temper; I am but too sensible of it. — My situation oppresses me, I own it: I see no remedy for it, and my courage forsakes me. —

JUL. Irresolution and weakness aggravate e-

very evil. For more than six months, Madam, you have been repenting, and forming a project of putting your affairs in order, without having resolution to carry so laudable a design into execution. At first, the means were more easy, but the longer you hesitate, the greater are the difficulties.

MAR. But how shall I unravel the chaos in which my affairs are now involved? Where can I begin?

JUL. By knowing exactly the state of your debts.

MAR. O, I shall know that this day; I have received a note from the person to whom I gave that examination in charge; he informs me he will come this evening at eight o'clock to give me his answer.

JUL. But, Madam, about how much do you suppose you are in debt?

MAR. Ah! I am much afraid that my debts amount almost to two thousand pounds. In short, I shall make a total reformation; I shall give up my allowance; I can forego it all. — Ah! may I atone for my faults at that price! —

JUL. You are to know the state of your affairs this evening at eight o'clock; but, Madam, you are to be with the Viscountess.

MAR. What can I do to be rid of her? — She will wish to sit up late; and in the present state of my mind this tete-a-tete will distress me. I have a great mind to write to her, that it is impossible for me to receive her.

JUL. That cannot be ; she will not be refused.

MAR. [warmly.] It is cruel, however, to be importuned to such excess by a person one does not love ; or at least who is such a trifling character that she cannot inspire any very tender sentiment.

JUL. Whom one does not love — It is your own expression, it escaped you — But, however, she will force herself upon you, and indeed she is authorised so to do. — There is the inconvenience of giving all the rights of friendship to a person whom one does not love. By the tenor of your conduct, you have formed an engagement with her, and likewise with the world, from which you cannot suddenly withdraw yourself without being accused of inconsistency, and improper conduct. You cannot possibly break with her ; you must draw off by degrees.

MAR. How could I form such a connection !

JUL. Neither of you love one another ; time will easily disengage you. But to return to your affairs ; if you will give me leave, my Lady, I will manage them in your stead ; I will see your man of business, and after Lady Dormer goes away, I will give you an account of our conversation.

MAR. With all my heart. I will go and look for some papers which I forgot to send to him, and which you can deliver — I am afraid to hear what he will tell you ! — Do not mention it to

me, my dear Juliet, till the Viscountess goes away, for if it be possible I wish to conceal those troubles from her, which I can communicate to nobody but you. Talk with this man, my dear Juliet, and tell him, that if he can extricate me from this dreadful labyrinth, without its coming to the ears of my husband or aunt, I shall owe him more than life, for I shall owe to him the saving my honour. He has given me this hope, if my debts do not exceed two thousand pounds; and I pray you to remind him of it.

JUL. I shall forget nothing you desire, my Lady, you may depend upon it.

MAR. Repeat to him, that I will give up my allowance for the necessary time, and will enter into an engagement for that purpose. He lies under great obligations to my family; make him sensible of that; in short, tell him that he is my only hope, and last resource.

JUL. Is it possible, my Lady, that you can have recourse to a Stranger when you have an Aunt?

MAR. I only desire that this stranger will lend me part of the money for which I have occasion at present, and I will pay the interest. This sum, after all, will not be very considerable; for several of my creditors will give me time.

JUL. I very well believe it; they have robbed you sufficiently for that. You have never examined nor stopped an account; you know the price of nothing; you have bought every thing

upon credit : these are the principal causes of your present embarrassment. But let us talk no more of that ; let us forget the past, and think only of what is to come.

MAR. Ah ! if I can pay my debts, do you imagine, Juliet, that I shall ever contract new ones.

JUL. If I believed, Madam, that you could be capable of such misconduct after the lesson you have received, I must look upon you as most extravagant and contemptible : Judge then if I can entertain any such thought.

MAR. Ah Juliet ! you see into the very bottom of my heart—when we have seen the whole extent of our faults, and sincerely lamented them, it is impossible ever to relapse. But let us lose no time ; before the Viscountess returns we must look for these papers.—Come, my dear Juliet, [she takes her under the arm] into my closet. Come. [They go out.]

End of the Second Act.

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

JULIET [alone.]

THREE thousand five hundred pounds.—
 She owes three thousand five hundred pounds !
 — Good heavens ! what a state would she be
 in at present, if she was acquainted with this
 afflicting news ! This man, upon whom she has
 such dependance, I have found so cold and un-
 feeling—In short, I have written the sad detail
 to Lady Jemima, of whose generosity I have
 not the least doubt ; but the most part of the
 debts are already due, and I don't know if she
 can satisfy these demands.—My unhappy mis-
 tress, to what a precipice has she hurried her-
 self !—Her situation makes her a thousand
 times more dear to me. When she was happy,
 I was far from knowing the full force of that
 affection by which I am attached to her !—She
 suspects nothing as yet, and sleeps in tranquillity

with the Viscountess. Since the distressing conversation, I have seen her but one moment; and I had composed my countenance so well, that far from discovering any thing grievous, I thought I could observe she had conceived good hopes. Her Aunt, her most respectable Aunt, will not abandon her, I am certain.— But, three thousand five hundred pounds!— has she so much!— If it must be sought for, and she be obliged to have recourse to men of business, the secret will be divulged; and its being known, is all that I dread!— I think I hear somebody coming. O heaven! 'tis my Lady.— I expect Lady Jemima's answer; and, in the mean time, must dissemble if possible.

SCENE II.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

MAR. The Viscountess is writing a note in my chamber, and I have seized the moment to speak a word with you, my dear Juliet: I won't ask you any questions—but when I saw you just now, you had a look of satisfaction.

JUL. For God's sake, Madam, do not let the Viscountess see that you have the least trouble or anxiety, I intreat you: you know how excessively indiscreet she is. Be mistress of yourself,

and don't be cast down.—[She takes her by the hand, and kisses it.] My dear Mistress!—Ah Madam, excuse me!—[Aside.] I cannot conceal my grief!

MAR. Juliet—you are in tears!—Ah, I am ruined!—there is no resource; I see it plainly.

JUL. What have I said then?—But, Madam, don't be afraid, you need not despair—no, you may take my word for it, this very day will put an end to your distress, I hope—I am even certain of it.

MAR. It is possible?—But why these tears then?

JUL. It was a moment of tenderness which I could not repress—but I swear to you I am satisfied—yes, I am.

MAR. You would not deceive me?

JUL. [aside.] Alas!—[aloud.] All that I can tell you is, that I am not as yet perfectly informed of your affairs; the man to whom you gave it in charge, has not been able to examine them entirely. I have given him your papers, and to-morrow morning you shall have a final positive answer.

MAR. But at least he has given you some hope?

JUL. I have a great deal, and I believe very well founded.—

MAR. Ah! Juliet, you restore me to life.

JUL. Resume your gaiety, then, that the Viscountess may have no suspicion; I pray you, my Lady, let her see no change in your behaviour.
—Secrecy is so essential.

MAR. I will restrain myself, I promise you ; but it is very difficult.—Now that my eyes are open, if you knew how troublesome I find her ; how foolish, insignificant, and ridiculous she appears to me—and as I plainly see she never loved me !—But hush—I think I hear her.

JUL. Yes, 'tis she.

SCENE III.

VISCOUNTESS dressed in a chamberlounge,
MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

VIS. [to the Marchioness.] I have written my note. My dear Juliet, I pray you, will you be so good as to go and look for my knotting bag, which I have left within.

MAR. And mine too.

JUL. Yes, my Lady. [She goes out.]

VIS. I am so very active, that it is impossible for me to remain one moment idle.—How I pity people who cannot employ themselves ; occupation has so many attractions.—I was very sensible of it last summer ; I made a delightful excursion into the country ; where we led a most delicious life—mild—simple.—We never went to bed till three in the morning. The evening toilet was a little tiresome, for we dressed as if we had been in Paris ; but, in other respects,

there was liberty, gaiety — —and play—ruinous to be sure ; but I won two hundred guineas ; —and then delightful readings after mid-day, while we were knotting.—O it was charming.

MAR. What work was read to you ?

VIS. I do not very well remember.—I think however it was a romance—a moral, philosophical romance ; for now-a-days the secret has been found to introduce philosophy in the most trifling works. — What a charming age is the present ! — Only mention Philosophy and Metaphysics to our mothers and mothers-in-law, and you will see how they will look.—Ha ! here are our work-bags. — Come, let us sit down to work. [Juliet draws chairs.]

MAR. A small table.

VIS. There, place it between us.

MAR. My heart, here is your bag. [They sit down.]

VIS. What an evening we shall pass ; that I could but in this manner dedicate all my evenings to friendship !—[She reaches out her hand to the Marchioness.] I have a terrible pain in my stomach. [She yawns.]

MAR. * And so have I. [She yawns.]

JUL. [aside.] This delightful evening begins very lively. But that is always the way.

* The two Friends, during the whole of this Scene, should have the appearance of being tired, and the greatest listlessness : they should speak in a cold slow manner, and without attention.

MAR. Juliet, you need not stay. [Juliet goes out. After a long silence the Marchioness continues.] My heart, have you any thick gold?

VIS. Certainly, upon the gold bobbins: I never net any other. Will you have a Fagot? Come, I will give you one; there is nothing I like so much as making a fagot. [After a long silence.] Do you go in the traineaux on Tuesday?

MAR. I believe not. Do you go?

VIS. My God, yes, I shall go, and on Thursday too—What vexes me mortally is, that I am excessively chilly!—

MAR. [after a long silence.] What o'clock is it?

VIS. I have no idea—[She yawns.] Time seems to me to pass so quickly when we are together.

MAR. [yawns, then looks at her watch.] How is this! it is not eleven o'clock!

VIS. That is not possible; it is more than an hour since we supped. [She looks at her watch.] Three quarters past ten, that is all.—

MAR. At what o'clock did you order your carriage?

VIS. At one.

MAR. [aside.] O heavens!—What obstructions?

VIS. But my Coachman is so inattentive, that I will engage he won't be here before two.

MAR. [aside.] That is agreeable.

VIS. What is the matter with you, my heart?
You seem to be in pain.

MAR. Yes, my headach is grown much
worse.

VIS. And netting gives me a pain in my eyes.
—I have such uneasiness in my limbs.

[They both rise,

SCENE IV.

JULIET, VISCOUNTESS,
MARCHIONESS.

JUL. [to the Viscountess] Madam ——

VIS. What is the matter, Juliet?

JUL. There is a person within who desires to
speak to your Ladyship.

VIS. With me?

JUL. Yes, madam.

VIS. At this hour; it is very extraordinary.
Well, I will go and see who it is.

SCENE V.

MARCHIONESS, JULIET.

MAR. I shall have one moment's breathing,
however——Ah! I am worn out.——

JUL. I foresaw that your conversation would be very languid.

MAR. And the desire of remaining till two o'clock in the morning to net, without speaking a word, is truly inconceivable.

JUL. By sitting up so late, she won't rise to-morrow till mid-day ; dinner and dressing will employ her till it is time to go to some of the public entertainments, and then it will be a day over. If she went to bed betimes, what could she do with her mornings ?

MAR. Is that living—And with all this, she has such a levity ! She had, she told me, some time ago, things of the greatest importance to communicate to me, to ask my advice, and this evening she has totally forgotten her troubles and vexations, of which she was so impatient to give me the detail.

JUL. And you have not reminded her ?

MAR. I was careful not to do that ; for, after all, her silence is more agreeable to me than her conversation.

JUL. Here she comes. She seems to have a look of business ; I must go ; she certainly has a secret now to tell you. [She goes out.

SCENE VI.

VISCOUNTESS, MARCHIONESS.

VIS. Ah ! my heart, I am in such trouble and agitation.——

MAR. What has happened to you ?

VIS. It was one of my maids wanted to speak with me.

MAR. Well ?

VIS. She came to let me know, that my mother-in-law is dreadfully angry with me. She has been told the whole story of the Baroness ; she is a friend of her relations ; and the loss at play, which has been attributed to my counsels, has inclined my mother-in-law to read me a fine lecture.——Only think : she has fixed herself in my chamber, and waits to preach me a sermon.——She shall wait a considerable time, for I am determined to pass the night with you.

MAR. How foolish !

VIS. But would you have me go and expose myself to such a scene, having such delicate nerves, after having supped, and with such sensibility as you know I have——no, it is impossible. I shall remain here till to-morrow morning.——We will chat——I have so many things to tell you !—You cannot conceive how much I am to be pitied for what

I feel inwardly.—You frequently see me have short intervals of melancholy. This inequality is very excusable ; and all the philosophy in the world is not always sufficient to get the better of distresses, which affect so sensibly.

MAR. Your courage, at least, should be admired, by which you can so well conceal your feelings.

VIS. To be sure, I have courage—Were it not for some strong lines in my character, what would become of me ? Judge of my situation ; I will tell it you in two words ; I have a husband, who complains of me, and contradicts me incessantly ; a father-in-law, and a mother-in-law, who cannot endure me, and with whom I am obliged to live, since I am one of their family ; I have a hundred enemies, who blacken and abuse me ; and, except yourself, I have not a single friend.

MAR. It is a terrible situation ; but what have you done to soften it ?

VIS. I seek dissipation ; I never remain at home ; I go abroad, and run about ; I endeavour to find people, about whom I am indifferent, and who do not love me, that I may shun my family, who hate and torment me.

MAR. But one cannot always fly from home, it is necessary to be found there sometimes, and there is no shaking off the authority of a husband. Would it not be better to endeavour to gain the love of those on whom one depends, than to insult and irritate them, and

occasion their coming, perhaps, to violent extremities ?

VIS. But to please them one must almost renounce the world ; must remain at home a part of the day, and frequently sup there ; must contract no debts, nor ever play at Pharaoh.

MAR. [laughing] Why, truly, these are very hard and tyrannical conditions.

VIS. You laugh at me—I can very well conceive that these desires would not be very tyrannical to you, and that you, who are reason itself, would submit to them without pain : but I have not had the same advantages that you enjoy, the having received a compleat education. You have acquired a thousand accomplishments ; you can employ yourself, and you can remain at home without being tired ; you had an excellent guide to conduct your first steps into the world ; you received excellent advice, which served to form your heart and understanding ; it is not therefore astonishing that you have method, reason, and invariable principles. If you were not, as you are, a model of prudence and good conduct, you must have been born an idiot, or a fool. So, my dear friend, don't be too vain of all your perfections ; you owe the greatest part of them to the tender cares of your valuable aunt.

MAR. [aside] O heaven ! what a just and severe criticism does she make, without intending it !

VIS. For my part, I was sent to a convent in my infancy, and only quitted it to be married ; it follows naturally, you are sedate, and I am giddy—I gave myself up to the customs, which I found prevailing in the world ; having no resource within myself, I endeavoured to find in dissipation what alone could rescue me from a listless existence.

MAR. But you are so young, you still have it in your power to acquire knowledge and accomplishments.

VIS. I wish for it, and I do what I can—I attend a course of natural philosophy ; I have a billiard master ; I ride the great horse ; I learn to drive a phaeton ; yet, with all this, when I am alone in my closet, I do not find myself better engaged, or my retirement more agreeable.

MAR. I very well believe it ; the kind of study which you have chosen, cannot be a great resource in solitude.

VIS. However, that kind of study is very much in fashion, and all the women, now-a-days, run after it equally.

MAR. Let us leave the sciences and violent exercises to the men ; they have not our graces, we want their strength. They are destined for great affairs ; courage, boldness and enthusiasm is proper for them ; moderation, reason, and gentle manners are our portion. In endeavouring to resemble us, they debase themselves ; and we, by imitating them, renounce all our allurements, and lose the most certain means of pleasing.

VIS. So, my heart, you disapprove of a woman playing billiards, going a hunting, or attending philosophical lectures?

MAR. I think that in every thing, only the excess is to be condemned. A woman, who would dedicate her whole life to the occupations you mention, and who, at the same time, fails to cultivate any other talent, seems to me, I must own, very much to be pitied; for in short, at forty years of age, she can neither follow the chase, nor drive a phaeton.

VIS. It never occurred to me to think of what I shall do at forty—You have given me the idea, I must attend to it—I shall be sadly off at forty, I foresee that.—My heart, you talk like an angel; you have convinced me. I shall give up riding—for it tires me dreadfully.—But I hear Juliet.—What does she want with us?

SCENE VII.

MARCHIONESS, VISCOUNTESS, JULIET,
holding two Dominos and Masks.

JUL. [to the Viscountess] My Lady, here are the masquerade dresses you desired.

MAR. How, masquerade dresses!

VIS. There is a masquerade at the opera-house to-night.

MAR. Well, what then ?

VIS. What then, my heart ——— let us go to it.

MAR. I swear to you I will not go.

VIS. But hear me ; I am positively resolved not to go home till five in the morning ; it is now one o'clock, what shall we do till then ?

MAR. Whatever you please ; but, for my part, I am resolved to go to bed.

VIS. Well, I know that, 'tis your way ; you always begin with a refusal.

MAR. You shall no longer reproach me with my weakness, for I promise you from henceforth to persevere in my resistance.

VIS. I agree : but at present it would be too cruel ; you know very well I cannot go home.

MAR. Well, I offer you a bed.

VIS. I go to bed ! I sleep in my present agitation !

MAR. Will you persuade me that you can have no rest but at the masquerade ?

VIS. It will at least serve to drive away disagreeable thoughts, which I very much want at present.

JUL. [aside] That is very distressing.

VIS. I appeal to Juliet — Hear, my dear Juliet, I have a reason, a very powerful reason, which prevents my going home.

JUL. I know the reason, my Lady.

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VIS. How !

JUL. Mrs. Harriot, your maid, whom I never saw but once before in my life, has informed me, with the greatest exactness, of every particular that she has had the honour to tell you ; and as she did not desire me to be secret, I think I may be allowed to acquaint you, that you cannot very much depend upon her discretion.

VIS. But where shall I find a discreet maid ? She is the sixth to whom I have given my confidence ; I have dismissed five, I cannot do better — In short, you plainly see, Juliet, that it is better to go to the masquerade, than to wait here till morning, tiring ourselves to death — Come, dress your mistress.

MAR. 'Tis needless to persecute me —

JUL. [low to the Marchioness] You have no other way, my Lady, to get rid of her.

MAR. [low to Juliet] It is insufferable.

VIS. I assure you I have scarcely a greater desire to go to the masquerade than you have.

MAR. Yes, and it is from reason that you make this effort ; truly it is very heroic ! — But hear me ; I am content to go with you.

VIS. [with transport] Ah, charming woman ! — My heart, how I love you —

MAR. But it is upon condition, that if you find a woman of your acquaintance there, I shall leave you with her, and be at liberty to return.

VIS. Well, agreed ; with all my heart : that is but reasonable ! Come, come, let us dress.

JUL. [to the Viscountess] Will your Ladyship slip on your domino?

VIS. Most willingly [She dresses her.] We shall have some charming figures there.

MAR. [aside] What folly! — What inconsistency! — But her education is her excuse — She is really to be pitied. —

JUL. [to the Marchioness] Now, my Lady, for you. [She dresses the Marchioness.]

VIS. I am told that the masquerade will be very grand to-night — I believe that I shall be very agreeable there — Where are our masks? — Ha, there they are — I will take this one — Make haste, my little pufs — Ah! how charming you look in that dress! — What a droll habit — How I love to be disguised — And our head dress? —

JUL. There it is —

MAR. Let us put on our masks first.

[She puts on her mask.]

VIS. Make haste then, dear Juliet — my feet burn with impatience — This is just the time when the masquerade is delightful — Come, come, quickly. [She puts on her mask.]

MAR. Somebody is coming — See who it is, Juliet —

JUL. O my God, madam —

MAR. What is the matter?

JUL. I believe I hear Lady Jemima's voice.

MAR. O heaven!

JUL. I am not mistaken; it is she.

MAR. I tremble.

VIS. What an unlucky accident! —

JUL. [aside] What a terrible apparition at this instant.

SCENE VIII.

LADY JEMIMA, MARCHIONESS,
VISCOUNTESS.

[Lady Jemima remains a little at the bottom of the stage, looking with surprise at the masquerade dress; the Viscountess and Marchioness seem struck dumb and confused.]

L. JEM. [coming forward] It is with regret that I disturb your pleasures, but I must absolutely speak one word with my niece.

VIS. [low to the Marchioness.] Make your escape, my heart—I will remain and go through the scene in your place—I will sacrifice myself willingly—

MAR. [low to the Viscountess.] No, go yourself, I intreat you.

VIS. [low] I cannot forsake you.

L. JEM. I have forgotten the masquerade customs—and you are too well disguised for me to discover you——Niece, will you answer me?—

VIS. [approaching, with a masquerade voice] My dear aunt, I beg your pardon for this little masquerade—

MAR. [unmasking] Dear aunt, I am distracted.

VIS. [low to the Marchioness] 'Tis I then that must run for it—Adieu, my heart. I am inconsolable for what has happened. Aunts and mothers-in-law have certainly conspired against me this day: well, I will go and give myself up into the hands of mine, to punish me for the distress I have been the occasion of to you——Adieu. [She goes out.]

SCENE IX.

LADY JEMIMA, MARCHIONESS,
JULIET.

[Juliet moves some steps to go away.]

L. JEM. Stay, Juliet; you wrote to me; I owe you an answer, and I could not think of keeping you longer in suspense.

JUL. Ah, my Lady! I presume to guess it—

L. JEM. [to the Marchioness] Lay aside that embarrassed look, niece; do you see in my countenance any appearance of dissatisfaction? I have cause to complain of you, but you seem to be too sensible of your fault, to let it be possible for me to reproach you.

MAR. You see me, my dear aunt, penetrated with grief and confusion; the excess of your

indulgence makes me still more to blame—I dare not give you the particular reasons which might plead a little in my vindication, but be so good as to ask Juliet in what manner I have been misled, and with what reluctance.

L. JEM. Without knowing your reasons, and without being able to approve of them, I suppose, since you have broken your promise, that it must have cost you a severe struggle.

MAR. I deceived you ; but how have I suffered for it ! Ah ! if you could see my heart !

L. JEM. You have grieved me ; you have told me a falsehood, but you have not deceived me. While you were telling me that story, I enjoyed one pleasure, that of being convinced by your blushing and your awkwardness, that you were telling a lie for the first time. As I have more experience than you, by being more artful, you would not have succeeded better in attempting to persuade me, and I know that I should never have forgot it. Several circumstances may make one forgive a levity, a want of respect ; but nothing can render an instance, a single instance of falsehood excusable. Cease then, my child, to reproach yourself for a fault which I forgive, and shall never again mention. I came this night, I broke in upon you, not for this explanation, but to bring you some good news which I have been informed of but this instant.

MAR. Good news ! — What is my husband on his way ? — Will he be here soon ? —

L. JEM. You have guessed it — and I came to give you previous information —

MAR. [aside] O God! [Aloud.] Soon—
In how many days?

L. JEM. He intended to surprise you——
but I thought it would be right to give you
notice——he has written to me.——
he will arrive this night——he will be here
in an hour——

JUL. She turns pale——she staggers——
Ah, Madam!——

[Lady Jemima and Juliet support the Marchioness.]

MAR. He will be here in an hour?—

L. JEM. From whence this sudden alarm?
——What have you to dread? Have you
not a mother, a friend?——Have you no-
thing to say to her?——Cannot I obtain
one moment's confidence?——When you
refuse me, is it possible you cannot see that my
heart must guess the reason of your distress?
——Will you not speak, my girl?——
Is this the return you make to all my tender-
ness?

MAR. What a time have you chosen to ask
that confidence I owe you by so many titles.—
You are every thing to me———I love you
as I ought to love you; I cannot better express
to you the excess of such an affectionate at-
tachment——If it depended only on a con-
fession of my faults, you may be assured my
heart would be open to you——If you
were only my friend, you should know all my
secrets.——But my benefactress!—to abuse
your goodness, your generosity——no, I
cannot——

L. JEM. Since you will not speak out, I must prevent you——Thanks to the attention of Juliet, it is in my power. I am grieved that it is to her only I must be indebted for the happiness of being useful to you.

MAR. What do I hear! O heavens!

JUL. Yes, Madam, I must own I have betrayed you; you owe three thousand five hundred pounds——

MAR. My God! is it possible?—

L. JEM. They are paid.

MAR. Ah! dear aunt!—

JUL. [kissing her hand.] Allow me, madam—

MAR. How can I ever acknowledge such kindness, and how can I ever expiate my faults!—But, my dear aunt, my heart is torn when I think that such generosity must injure your fortune, and that it should cost you so great a sacrifice to repair my follies.

L. JEM. No, my child, don't be uneasy, I had that sum lying by me; could I make use of it so pleasing to myself? There is the fruit of œconomy; by its means we can render essential services to those we love: what gratified whim could ever be expected to yield a pleasure comparable to such inexpressible happiness?

MAR. You have saved my honour in the eyes of the world; but what remorse you leave me! I have never been so sensible, as at this moment, of the faulty extravagance of my conduct.—When you have done every thing for me, by an inconceivable fatality, I am, perhaps, but the

more to be pitied—Can you still love me ? Can I flatter myself that I have lost none of my titles to your affection, after having so greatly offended?——Can you, from henceforth, esteem me, and believe my promises?—For pity's sake, condescend, if possible, to reconcile me to myself.

L. JEM. Be calm, my dear, be calm ; do not suspect that I have any apprehensions for what may happen, which your repentance would destroy, if I could have conceived any. You have done amiss, it is true, but I must ascribe the greatest part of your faults to myself.

MAR. To you ? O heavens !

L. JEM. Yes, undoubtedly : tho' I gave you good advice, I did not point out the dangers of the world to you, but too vaguely. If I had been sufficiently particular in distinguishing the dangers, with your understanding and feelings, I am certain you would have avoided them. You have received a severe lesson from experience, which I might have prevented. But all is recovered ; let us forget our sufferings, and our sorrows, and think only of the happiness which awaits us.

MAR. Happiness ! ah ! you have really let me know what it is : it is in the bosom of our families, and in discharging our duties, that it is to be found. A life of virtue, and the most pleasing and natural affections, lead to, and procure happiness. Vanity, affectation, and unnatural manners keep it at a distance. It is only the portion of a pure heart, and a just judgment.

L. JEM. [embracing her.] It must be yours. It shall be so, I am certain. But come, my child, let us go and meet Lord Germaine, come,

MAR. I am then to see him again, and nothing to disturb my joy—Ah! my dear aunt! —Juliet, come with us; I would enjoy the pleasure of being reunited to all that I love, at the same instant!

JUL. You should see into the bottom of my heart, madam, and there you will surely discover the excess of my happiness and gratitude.

L. JEM. Let us lose no more time; come, Juliet, come, my dear girl.

[She takes the Marchioness under the arm, who gives hers to Juliet.]

MAR. [in going out.] Ah! how happy am I!

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